NOW & THEN

THE APPALACHIAN MAGAZINE

CENTER FOR APPALACHIAN STUDIES AND SERVICES | EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
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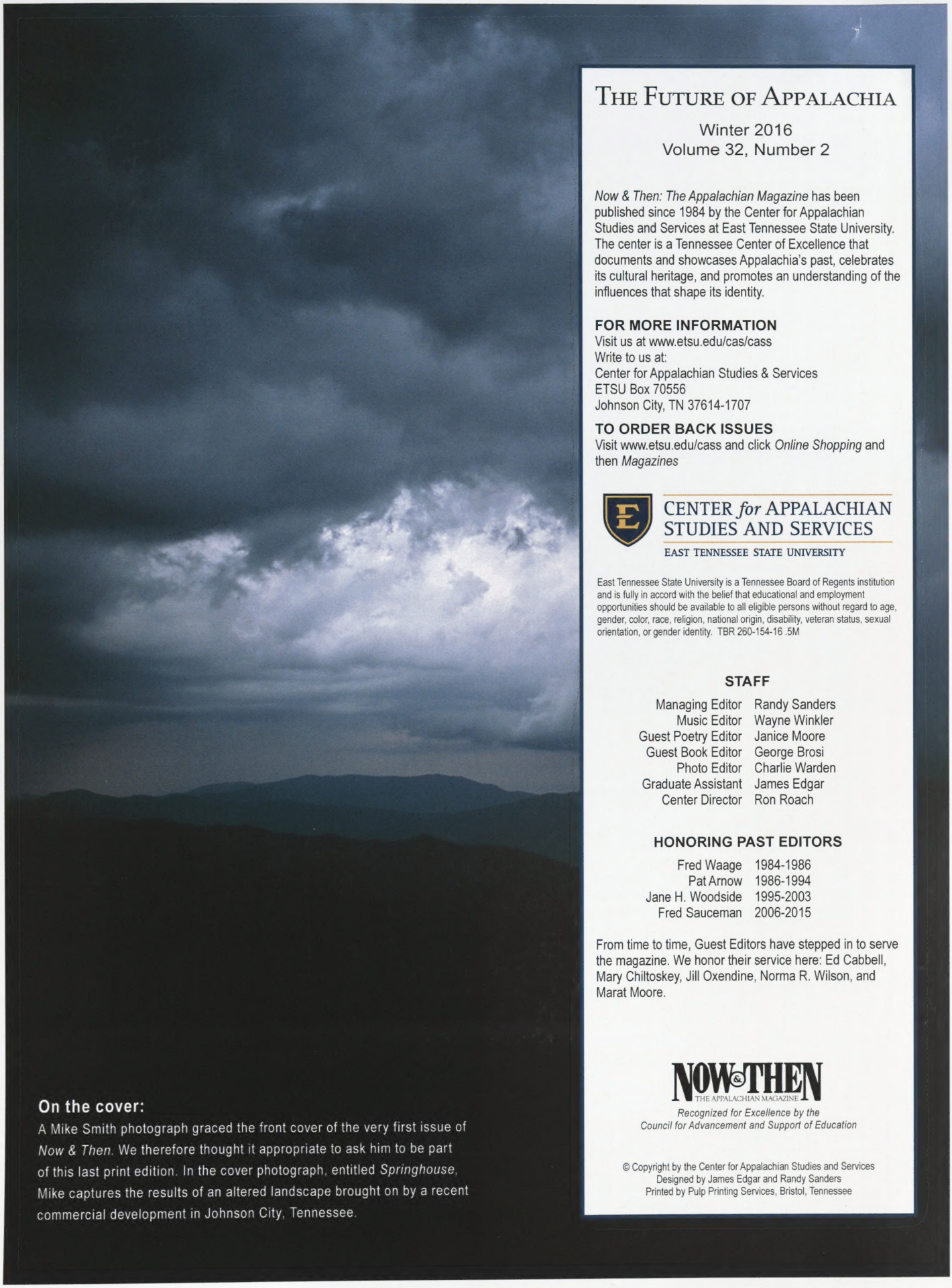
THE FUTURE OF APPALACHIA



The Future of Appalachia

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Now & Then: The Appalachian Magazine has been published since 1984 by the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services at East Tennessee State University. The center is a Tennessee Center of Excellence that documents and showcases Appalachia's past, celebrates its cultural heritage, and promotes an understanding of the influences that shape its identity.

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NOW & THEN
THE APPALACHIAN MAGAZINE

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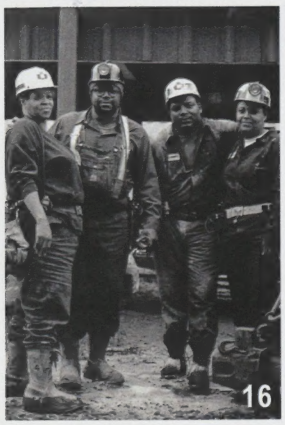
On the cover:

A Mike Smith photograph graced the front cover of the very first issue of *Now & Then*. We therefore thought it appropriate to ask him to be part of this last print edition. In the cover photograph, entitled *Springhouse*, Mike captures the results of an altered landscape brought on by a recent commercial development in Johnson City, Tennessee.

Photo by James Edgar



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From the Director

Ron Roach

Director, Center for Appalachian Studies and Services

Chair, Department of Appalachian Studies

NOW AND THEN
Center for Appalachian Studies and Services/
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VOLUME 1, NUMBER 1 FALL, 1984
FROM THE EDITOR
Fred Waage
Introducing Now and Then
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The Future of Appalachia

The first (left) and most recent (right) front covers of *Now & Then: The Appalachian Magazine* share a common denominator—both featured photographs by East Tennessee State University professor and Guggenheim Fellowship recipient, Mike Smith.

Now and Then: Our title expresses the dual experience of Appalachian culture, looking back to the roots of traditions, and following the continuity through to the present, as it perseveres or is displaced by new ways of living, thinking, and feeling.

Fred Waage wrote the above words in the first issue of *Now & Then: The Appalachian Magazine* in 1984. Except for a brief period in the early 2000s, the magazine has been published continuously since then, providing its readers with thoughtful, provocative, and entertaining content about the Appalachian region. We are happy to report that this mission will continue, albeit in a new and expanded format.

As Fred said, one goal for *Now & Then* has always been to look forward to "new ways of living, thinking, and feeling." With the technological revolution of the past twenty years, we are currently living through one of the most dramatic lifestyle shifts in human history. As more and more readers have shifted from paper to digital platforms, it has become increasingly difficult for small print publications to remain economically

viable. *Now & Then* is no exception and, unfortunately, subscriptions have declined for some years. But, while financial considerations are important, the greater question for us is, "How can we ensure the continued relevance of *Now & Then* magazine to the Appalachian region and how can we share its content with a wider audience?"

After much deliberation, it became obvious that the best answer to the above question is to move *Now & Then* into a digital-only version. This issue, "The Future of Appalachia," makes it an ideal transition point. After publication of this issue, we will take a brief hiatus and then re-launch *Now & Then* in an expanded, all-digital version.

Several reasons make this the right thing to do:

1. **Expanded Reach**
   A digital format will make the magazine more relevant to a wider audience and exponentially expand the reach of the publication. Readers all over the world will now be able to access *Now & Then*.

2. **Enhanced Content**
   The new format will enable us to provide a much greater amount of material and the ability to include audiovisual content that was impossible in a print format.

3. **Graduate Students**
   The digital platform will make it much easier for us to involve the young scholars from our fast-growing graduate program in Appalachian Studies. We are currently designing a graduate-level class that will allow our students to help produce the digital magazine, which will not only provide fresh material but also give these students valuable experience as they prepare for their careers.

4. **Technological Partnerships**
   The digital magazine will be produced in collaboration with the ETSU Department of Media and Communication, which is in the process of launching an innovative partnership with Adobe Systems, the industry leader in digital content production and marketing. This collaboration will allow us to produce a digital magazine of the highest quality.

We want to take this opportunity to thank you for your loyal support to *Now & Then*. We could not accomplish our mission without you and, as we embark on a new chapter in the magazine's history, we ask for your continued help in several ways. First, although we will all miss the print version of *Now & Then*, we hope that you will continue to read the new edition on your computers, tablets, and phones. Second, we hope that you will freely share our digital magazine with your friends and on social media. Finally, while we will no longer sell subscriptions to the magazine, if you want to continue supporting its important mission, annual donations to underwrite the work of the magazine would be most helpful.

Please check our website (www.etsu.edu/cas/cass/nowandthen) in the coming months for updates as we prepare for the publication of our first online edition. We hope that you will continue to enjoy the magazine in its new format as we continue to present a fresh, revealing picture of life in Appalachia, both now and then.

Wilma Dykeman was one of my favorite Appalachian writers and both an interview with her (Vol. 6 No. 2) and an article about her (Vol. 22 No. 2) appeared in the pages of *Now & Then*. In her famous history of the French Broad River, she paraphrased a Robert Frost poem to the land he loved, writing:

> I'm going out to clean the spring and wait for it to flow clear again; I may taste its sweetness. I'm going out to feel the soft yield of winter moss and mulch beneath my woods' feet. Won't you come too?
>
> I'm going out to hear the slow talk of some stranger becoming friend as I listen to his life; to see the wide sweep of the river's silent power around a certain bend beneath the sycamores . . . Won't you come too?

Appalachia likewise continues to be a region with a wide sweep of peoples and places, full of power. We are eager to embark on this new path, exploring the land we love. Won't you come too?❖

Peach Iris

Sandy Coomer

Even as the mountain towns in Tennessee
fill with broken glass and rotten wood, even
as the old homestead is bulldozed, the dry
clapboards burned, the hillocks leveled, I dig
the tubers of my grandmother's peach iris

and plan for spring. She knew a garden
would carry her from the farm to a proper house
off the highway, would smooth the tenuous threads
of change when her family spread out, some north
to the factories of Illinois, some to the big cities

of Nashville, Atlanta. She carried viburnum
over the mountain in a box lined with wet newspaper,
forsythia and maple seedlings, daffodils, snow crocus,
coneflower and Shasta daisy, seeds of aster and zinnia,
and iris tubers, creamsicle peach, divided from ones

her grandmother brought a hundred years ago
from Virginia. I work under azure sky, my spade
dividing thick white flesh, matted roots, green swords
standing tall in the face of what changes, clinging
to the deep velvet blooms wrapped inside.

Published in the chapbook, *Continuum* (Finishing Line Press, 2012)

Sandy Coomer's poetry has been published in numerous literary journals, including *River and South Review*, *Euphemism*, and *Firefly Magazine*. Her third chapbook, *Rivers within Us*, is forthcoming from Unsolicited Press in 2017. She lives in Brentwood, Tennessee.

The Return of Mountain Honey

Chris Baker and Sudipto Sanyal

Gary Strange knew very little about bees when he started his first hive in 1983. "They ate me alive," says Gary, who grew up in Cocke County, in the crossroad town of Del Rio, a rural mountain community on the North Carolina and Tennessee border, just outside of the Cherokee National Forest. In a former furniture factory, he operates Strange Honey Farm producing Tennessee Mountain Honey. Here from his processing plant, he sells the honey of 1,200 hives made from local locust, clover, sourwood, and wildflower nectars to people up and down the East Coast. Leaning over the counter in a Little Debbie baseball cap, he offers, "We made a living on the land. This was my first full-time job."

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Appalachia's mountain farms remain the nation's most diverse. The hilly terrain meant families practiced a variety of subsistence strategies, including beekeeping. At first glance, Gary is not what you would think of as a naturalist. However, as the conversation continues, it becomes clear he knows something about bees the rest of the country seems to have forgotten. "Local farms use very little pesticide. We have lost a lot fewer colonies. Out west, the pesticides used by big farms are a major killer of bees. We don't have big farms."

The truth is, bees thrive in this botanical wonderland where he spent his childhood in the Appalachian hardwood forest. These hollows once were the nation's capital for small-scale, illicit corn liquor production. Both beekeeping and moonshine were common practices of Appalachia's early settlers. Cocke County's small farmers supplied the infamous Thunder Road. In a twist of fate the whiskey business is again thriving. Only this time, Thunder Road is a tourist destination to the growing number of Southern urban distilleries. Moonshine survived here because of mountain terrain. Today, no one is encroaching on what helps bees thrive. The return of commercial and small-scale beekeeping is renewing its role as an Appalachian foodway.

As my brother Brian and I drive off, bees from the ten or so hives on the edge of the parking lot have filled our car. The drive is a stunning summer experience of wildflowers. Once a railroad stop farming community, today the area is slowly becoming part of a tourist economy fueled by the over ten million-plus yearly visitors to the nearby Great Smoky Mountains. Up the road is Max Patch. Known as the "Jewel of the Appalachian Trail," it is one of a handful of Appalachia's balds. The view creates one of the most scenic vistas in the East. Like mountain regions all over the world, Del Rio is located in a vast depository of wildlife, rivers, and streams supporting flora and fauna—including bee-loving wildflowers and sourwood, along with other hardwood trees.

Mountain Honey and Appalachian Heritage

Beekeeping is again adapting to a changing Appalachia, providing new opportunities in the post-tobacco era. Historically, tending hives was one of several strategies on mountain farms. Early settlers used honey and beeswax for consumption and trade. Jeremey Lloyd, in *A Home in Walker Valley*, writes that in Tremont, in the Smokies, Will Walker keeps over one hundred hives on 5,200 acres. Walker sold honey from tulip and sourwood trees fetching eighty cents to a dollar for a ten-pound can. Likewise, Wilma Dykeman, in her book *The French Broad*, documents a spike in hives as honey was used in East Tennessee moonshine production when sugar was rationed during war.

Today, part-time honey producing and retailing is an unsung hero for East Tennessee's modern hobby and truck farms, orchards, wineries, and for events and tourist retail venues. As beekeeper associations continue to meet in church parking lots, farm bureaus,

and volunteer fire departments, commercial enterprises are supplying for changing tastes, including growing awareness of the region's health concerns.

Partially forested mountain communities are ideal for beekeeping, as nearby urban development fuels honey operations. Hay production and truck farming are thriving on a growing demand for local tomatoes, vegetables, and beef, along with a booming equestrian culture. Home and commercial apiary operations are part of local traditional practices on Appalachia's family farms, which also preserve heirloom seeds and maintain free range stock breeds.

The contradictions of the new Appalachia are evident in the valley regions. Tennessee leads the nation in the loss of farm land, but also in the growth of farmers markets. Strange's honey is sold in country stores near the moonshine distilleries that help fuel Sevier County tourism. The contradictions are obvious—honey demand generates family farming in the very region where tourism and sprawl put farming at risk. Local honey makes its way to Knoxville's new co-op at Three Rivers Market, while continuing to thrive on the side of the road at farm stands, flea markets, and county farmers markets and fairs.

Mountain bees continue to swarm throughout the region. In rural southwest Virginia, Poor Valley Bee Farm sells honey and beekeeping equipment in Hiltons, less than a mile from the Carter Family Fold. The farm boasts a honey operation next to the heart of country music, along with a nearby retail Bee Hut, located at the Exxon gas station where Route 58 meets the AP Carter Highway. Beekeepers become botanists and educators. Blue Ridge Honey Company in north Georgia gives classes to make several types of honey. Other venues, like Honey Creek Farms in Dandridge, use their working farm and hives to promote a special events venue for weddings, Easter egg hunts, and barn dances.

Honey Futures

Colleges and university programs and agricultural extension partnerships are central to expanding policy support and beekeeping education in Appalachia. Among others, Berea College provides beekeeping classes while Young Harris College's Beekeeping Institute in north Georgia, directed by Dr. Paul Arnold, represents the South's largest program.

The most ambitious development approach promoting honey has been in Kentucky, where Tammy Horn, state apiarist, works to address policy initiatives around sustainable local jobs, forestry reclamation, and pollinator habitat. In 2007, she began Coal Country Beeworks and worked with surface mine companies to place hives on reclaimed former strip mines. Horn, who offers beekeeping classes in Hazard, argues in her book, *Bee Economy: What Women and Bees Can Teach Us about Local Trade and the Global Economy*, that investment in beekeeping, including beeswax and candles, can help sustain rural communities and engage the region's post-coal economic discourse.

Focusing on the role of the region's hardwood forest in honey production, her goal is to market what is distinct about Appalachian honey. Horn argues that forest-based beekeeping is agriculture, and that pollinator trees and flowers are crops. She adds, "The tree nectars are what makes the Appalachian honey unique, in my opinion, and absolutely necessary to reclamation."

Meanwhile, in today's new Del Rio, demand for wildflower honey is booming, renewing a century-old mountain practice. Gary travels with his hives to pollinate crops and orchards, including heirloom varieties of apples, and in the winter uses the factory to make hives. Beekeeping writ large in Appalachia is more than the sum of its parts. Since the identification of Colony Collapse Disorder in 2006, increasing attention has been given to a myriad of threats to honey bees, including pests, pathogens, pesticides, and loss of habitat. Local honey is both an ecological response to this crisis, largely created outside the region, and an indigenous economic strategy. From a community development perspective, giving voice to the role of honey requires real policy discussions on a sustained approach to supporting local, small-scale farming and agricultural enterprises that connect the future to local heritage and farm preservation. The return of mountain honey could possibly be very important to all of our futures.❖

Chris Baker is Professor of Sociology at Walters State Community College. He lives in Kodak, Tennessee.

Sudipto Sanyal is an Assistant Professor of English at Techno India University. He lives in Kolkata, India.

A Future in Fire

Fred Sauceman

Young Hunter Nance (left) and Steve Rains (right) tend the hickory-blackened pit at Ridgewood Barbecue in Bluff City, Tennessee. Photo by author.

On the Shipley Farm, on the Cumberland Plateau in Putnam County, Tennessee, students fresh out of high school are indoctrinated into the ancient science and art of growing cane. No longer viewed as a dying novelty practiced by grandparents, the cultivation of cane and the making of sorghum syrup are now in the hands of a new generation of Appalachian students and future farmers. Their renewed interest in what were once viewed as foodways fast becoming extinct is symbolic of the changing face of Appalachian cuisine and a promising sign of its permanence.

A quick look at Appalachian Food Summit membership confirms the optimism. Founded in 2013, the organization brings together writers, chefs, farmers, scholars, community activists, and traditional mountain food enthusiasts. They gather every fall to celebrate, study, and sample the food of the region. Over 100 people attended the fall 2016 summit gathering on the campus of Kentucky's Berea College. Of that number, over half were under the age of forty. At a soup bean, cornbread, and sorghum butter dinner during the 2016 event, over half of the 160 attendees were under four decades old.

Appalachian foodways are being embraced by an ever-younger generation of enthusiasts.

Another case in point is Hunter Nance, who looks barely old enough to be out of high school. His youth is encouraging, in a profession long dominated by much older men. Hunter is a pitmaster, a student of fire and smoke. His tools are hickory wood, fire bricks, and stainless steel. He works without a thermometer. He operates largely by instinct and a whole lot of patience. Keeping a fire at the right temperature is a "touch and go" enterprise, since it behaves differently every day.

Hunter plies his ancient trade in a mountain hollow, at Ridgewood Barbecue in Bluff City, Tennessee, about a mile from where he grew up. His presence at this East Tennessee institution is a sign, an indication that old ways are becoming new again. While some may still lament the future of barbecue cookery in the Appalachian South, a man like Hunter Vance is a symbol of its resurgence. He stands firm against the advent of gas and electricity. Barbecue, on his watch, still means smoke and fire.

Operated by the Proffitt family since 1948, Ridgewood has always represented the honest, the real, the unadorned, and the enduring. It has survived the building of new roadways around Bullock's Hollow, dietary vagaries and fads, and the long arm of the government. It proves, with its packed parking lot, that the future

of Appalachian barbecue is rooted firmly in its past.

Ridgewood is no historical curiosity. It's a vibrant, thriving restaurant whose employees refuse to take the easy way. Owner Larry Proffitt, who doubles as a pharmacist, says salespeople stop by almost weekly, trying to convince him to give up on the laborious techniques, the constant tending of the fire. They hawk modern cookers powered by gas and electricity. "Just push a button," they say, "and you can go home and forget the meat overnight."

Larry Proffitt sends them on their way. He prefers to cast his lot with the ways of his enterprising parents. His adventurous, risk-taking mother, Grace, dared to open a beer joint in what was a lonely, secluded hollow in 1948. Meanwhile, her husband, Jim, made rayon over at the Bemberg plant in Elizabethton. Grace kept a pistol under the counter, but she never needed it. Her gutsy, all-business personality was all the protection the place needed.

Four years after the Ridgewood opened, Sullivan County, Tennessee, went dry, and a major money-maker for the Proffitts was taken away. But, as Grace said, "I had two little boys to raise." So she and Jim turned from bar food to barbecue.

Their barbecued fresh ham caught on in the hills and hollows of East Tennessee. Along the way, Jim Proffitt created his own sauce. An early menu, in typical mountain humility, described it simply as "different." In that barbecue sauce, there are more than twenty ingredients. Those are the measurable ones. The immeasurable ones are independence, originality, resourcefulness, refusal to quit, and loyalty to the land and family, elements that shape both the past and the future of Appalachian cookery.

In the neighboring county of Carter, Jarrod Ellis embodies those same values. His work ethic and respect for tradition parallel the Ridgewood perfectly. And like pitmaster Hunter Vance, he is young. Ellis, a university-educated entrepreneur, has managed to get his barbecue sauce into area Ingle's stores, after experimenting with recipes for a year and a half. His restaurant, J's Corner, is a short-order establishment, on the surface. The sign on the top of the building doesn't even mention barbecue. But there's a hickory-filled cooker out front. While he does a thriving business in Philly cheesesteaks and hot dogs, it's barbecue that brightens his youthful countenance.

Ellis is a respectful Ridgewood disciple. While he will cook an occasional pork shoulder, if asked, for a catering event, he is firmly in the fresh ham camp. He and Larry Proffitt are fellow pheasant-hunters, and Ellis is quick to crown Proffitt as the king of East Tennessee barbecue. Ellis' barbecued fresh ham sandwiches and platters are testament to the Proffitt family's prominence. Yet he adds his own twist to the tradition, often mixing some apple wood into that load of hickory.

Ellis has been at it since 2008, in a building that once housed the nation's sixteenth Dairy Queen franchise. Before settling into his permanent quarters, he sold hot dogs on the street during Saturday night car shows in Elizabethton. Like the Proffitts, Ellis has never been afraid of hard work. It's not unusual, during warm weather, for him to cater three or four days a week, at events like open houses, weddings, school functions, and business ribbon-cuttings.

Traverse main roads and back roads in East Tennessee, and you'll note another encouraging trend: the proliferation of roadside barbecue. Most of the roving restaurants never advertise, and many of them, too, are in the hands of young people. They are symbolic of a barbecue renaissance taking place throughout Southern Appalachia.

A few counties outside the traditional borders of Appalachia, in Nashville, Tennessee, youth dominates as well. At the Belmont Boulevard location of Martin's BBQ, millennial Mike Brady cooks a whole hog every day. Standing in the pit, sweating, enrobed in smoke, and battling the heat, he turns the pig by himself, without complaint. He's proud of his life's work.

The barbecue business is but one example of how a new generation in Appalachia and the South is embracing old ways, not out of a sense of nostalgia or to join in a trend but rather in the realization that hard work and dedication to a craft bring rewarding results. As people like Hunter Vance and Jarrod Ellis understand, time is the most essential ingredient in perpetuating the foodways of Appalachia. Their investment of time, in an era when there are much easier ways to make a living, is a clear indication that the future of Appalachian food is secure. ❖

Fred Sauceman's book *The Proffitts of Ridgewood: An American Family's Life in Barbecue* will be published in the fall of 2017 by Mercer University Press in Macon, Georgia.

Accounting

Nancy Simpson

The green ghost in me is the land
I sold to developers.
They wanted money. I wanted time
that money can buy, but got
a kind of poverty. They cut trees,
dug deep septic tanks, and paved
a road across the highest ridge.
I sold my spring branch,
gave up my bloodroot.
Barking dogs frighten fox kits,
the old bear is gone,
and squirrels are settling down ridge.
Twenty houses line the mountain top
where trees stood. Men who live
in the houses take out their trash,
bring in wood for their fires.
In summer women sunbathe on wide decks
extending out over the mountainsides.
They feel transcendent, viewing
the blue lake that glistens in the distance.
They are exalted looking down on
the slow mob that moves through the valley.
I have some money now
but live with a green ghost in me.

Published in *Living Above the Frost Line: New and Selected Poems* (Carolina Wren Press, 2010)

Nancy Simpson of Hayesville, North Carolina, is the author of poetry collections: *Across Water*, *Night Student* and *Living Above the Frost Line: New and Selected Poems*. Her poems have been featured in *The Georgia Review*, *Southern Poetry Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, and other magazines.

Looking Backwards: 2049

Michael Joslin

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Back in the 1960s as I looked ahead to the year 2000, I regretted that when the new millennia began, I would be too old to enjoy it. However, when the century rolled over, I was doubly happy and surprised. Not only did I still feel young and frisky at fifty years of age, but the collapse of civilization that many feared never happened. My computer worked fine on New Year's Day.

Now, as I approach my hundredth birthday, I can look back with similar surprise at the bountiful life that Appalachia has provided me in my old age. Around 2016 when the end of my working days stared me down, I feared that I did not have the financial resources for a comfortable retirement. Having worked as a journalist and a college professor, I had not amassed a fortune. Just the opposite, both my professions melted away in the digital age with online news and online schools totally changing the economics of both fields.

As I pondered my situation, I looked back to my early days in the Appalachian Mountains. In 1982 I had left a private college in Florida to find a fresh start in a place with still vibrant nature and space and clean air to breathe. Being young, I did not fear poverty; I knew I could always find something to pay me enough to support my wife, Kathleen, and our dog and cats. I left Jacksonville and drove up I-95 to I-26 and turned west.

Driving past Asheville, I took a side road to Barnardsville, and then continued over a steep ridge on a rough, unpaved section to find myself in the Cattail Creek Community. After asking around, I secured a simple shack above the creek with a stunning view of the Black Mountains, all for seventy-five dollars a month. Since we arrived in July, the living was easy. I had enough money to get us through a few months, and when my neighbor David Buchanan needed help in his tobacco, I found work.

A child of the sixties, I had sampled drugs, but believe me there is nothing quite like the dizzy disorientation I got from the nicotine soaking into my skin from topping tobacco plants and later from cutting stalks and impaling them on sharp spikes at the harvest. The work paid well, but was not something I wanted to repeat. So I looked for an alternative and found that I could grow another plant that could support me with less labor and unpleasant side effects—marijuana.

To get through the winter I supplemented my savings and tobacco money with freelance journalism, selling photographs and feature stories to area newspapers, but I knew that we would need more than that source would yield. So I planned my first venture as a farmer.

I had grown a few cannabis plants before and knew that, after all, pot was simply a weed that grew readily in the proper conditions, so I gathered seeds, both sativa and indica, over the winter, and as snow melted

from the mountains, started plants indoors to transplant when spring firmly established itself. I lined up little pots by the east-facing windows, and watch as the small green stalks pushed to the surface and spread their leaves. As the seedlings grew, I spent several days preparing planting plots. Clearing saplings and brush, I dug up the ground and worked in generous amounts of chicken manure.

The chickens had arrived over the past several months as my neighbor, who fought roosters, ignored the hens and young roosters he didn't find worthy. They wandered through a thick, tall, hemlock hedge onto my place, where an old outbuilding made a sheltering coop. I happily fed them, harvesting eggs and watching as my flock steadily increased. I had several pert little banties, some pugnacious game cocks and hens, and some full-sized dominekers, Rhode Island reds, and leghorns. As I nurtured my flock, I carefully husbanded the droppings for my future crop. The chickens entertained us as well as furnishing eggs and fertilizer. Kathleen looked forward each day to strewing cracked corn and laying pellets to bring the flock flying, running, and hopping to her feet. Many of the banties and games roosted in the hemlocks, while the full-sized breed preferred perches I had built in the old barn. I shoveled the manure into a compost pile. We enjoyed our simple life on the mountain.

Now, I knew that growing pot was illegal, but in my innocence and ignorance, I thought, "Who would ever know?" The mountains stretched for miles covered with dense growth. So, soon I had my plants in the ground in sheltered but sunny spots. I watered, weeded, and trimmed my plants, at times meditating amongst them. As the males began to distinguish themselves by the tiny balls hanging down, I realized that if I wanted a premium crop of sinsemilla, I would have to destroy the males. I felt the same reluctance and regret that arises when I had to castrate a dog or cat. But I knew I had to do what I had to do. So first I bent the stalks, by that time a half inch in diameter, to stress the plants and increase the THC in the leaves and tiny buds. Before the blossoms opened, I cut the plants down, and hung them inside to cure.

Fortunately, we had few visitors at that time, for soon the sweet smell of pot filled the house. Meanwhile I tended the females as they produced the first tiny tendrils of their blossoms. Soon I had trimmed off the cured male leaves, which smoked smoothly with a more physical high than mental. I even sold some bags to friends who were desperate.

I watched as the female buds swelled and expanded under the August sun. Clear drops of resin flowed among the tendrils, filling the air in the patch with an intoxicating aroma. This first year the two strains ran true to form; the Indica with broader leaves and the Sativa with narrow leaves and taller plants. As the season progressed, a distinct, skunky odor wafted from the patches.

As days shortened and night developed a chill, I began to harvest buds, snipping them off and bringing them into the house to cure. I had lines stretched all across the kitchen, where Kathleen kept a fire burning in the old, well-used CopperClad cookstove we had bought at a junk shop in Micaville. The odor now became overpowering as the juicy buds dried in the sultry atmosphere of the house. But the heat was not the only thing making me sweat.

For the past month or so, the local newspaper, *The Yancey Journal*, had run stories of pot busts in the area. The editor loved the drama. He kept a fifteen-foot long marijuana stalk hanging on the wall over his desk, a memento of a raid a couple years before. Obviously, law enforcement had a greater interest in illegal farming than I had anticipated.

Adding to my concern, my landlord, Mickey Royce, and his wife, Dora (a Penland-native, born and raised here), had come down just at this time to stay in their house, which was less than fifty yards up the hill from our shack. Also, Mickey, who was not from the mountains and found life here boring, spent the first two days on top of my house spreading asbestos coating to preserve the roof's integrity, which was suspect at best. We spent a lot of time outside at a rough picnic table I had built. Our dogs (joining our English shepherd we had four hounds left from a litter of fourteen that an old black-and-tan bitch had borne beneath our porch in the fall) and chickens (several broods had increased our flock to more than fifty) kept things exciting, and provided topics to discuss while Mickey worked. I told him that we were drying mint and lamb's quarter in the house for winter when he asked why we kept the stove going.

Then one day after the Royces had left, a sheriff's patrol car came up the driveway. Kathleen had driven to Burnsville to buy groceries. I sat

"FORTUNATELY, WE HAD FEW VISITORS AT THAT TIME, FOR SOON THE SWEET SMELL OF POT FILLED THE HOUSE."

on the porch reading *Look Homeward, Angel*. At first, the dogs kept the deputies busy, giving me time to come up with a plan. I ran inside and grabbed my 35mm camera, and hurried out, whistling the dogs off. Before the chief deputy could say anything other than "Get down," to the dogs, I asked, with enthusiasm, "Are you here to look for pot? I freelance for the papers; can I go along with you to get pictures."

Obviously, my gambit surprised them. They hemmed and hawed, looking around the place, then asked how they could drive up behind the house. My landlord's house sat at the end of the driveway above my shack. Surrounding the property in back were about two acres of woodland. In front, woods and weeds grew wild above a steep bank dropping down to the road above Cattail Creek. On the other side of the upper woods, a Florida preacher has put in a small development of four, A-frame houses, but to get there, the deputies would have to drive back down the driveway, then down the road to the next driveway, which led through David Buchanan's property before winding around to the development. Above that were old logging roads and trails that wound all through the Black Mountains for miles. Everyone in the community knew that I spent much of my time wandering through the woods exploring the area. Or, as law enforcement thought, growing pot.

So I sent them down the road to spend the next week combing the mountains for my pot plantations, which actually I had located in thickets within a hundred feet above and below the house. I would crawl through briars on my hands and knees, leaving no clear path, unlike the miles of trails clearly trampled through the forest.

I sold my crop down in Florida, earning enough to get us comfortably through the year. Soon I found a job at a small private college and continued my freelance journalism. As our children came, I gave up illegal activities, and for thirty years we lived a frugal life in western North Carolina.

Who would have thought that by 2020, when the Democrats finally threw the Republicans out of the North Carolina statehouse and governor's mansion, pot would be legal? Each growing season I now fill two acres of my pastureland with fields of marijuana. I enjoy cultivating the crop, and sampling my produce eases the pains of my arthritic knees and hands, and brings contentment to my old age. More importantly, my agricultural endeavors earn me three times what my social security income and the interest from my TIAA-CREF account bring in. What Kathleen and I had feared would be a frugal life after work has turned into a truly bountiful existence.

In the early decades of the twenty-first century, development threatened to destroy the rural character of the mountains, but once marijuana became legal, folks found a way to utilize their old tobacco fields and pastures and to pay the taxes which had been driving them to sell their land to developers.

The future of Appalachia looks bright to me, even if I will not be here to enjoy it. The land will produce and endure.❖

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Appalachia, 2061:
Epiphanies and Revelations

Roberta Herrin

The eighteenth-century writer Edmund Burke is famous for saying, "Those who don't know history are doomed to repeat it." Versions of this statement are attributed to several writers, most notably George Santayana ("Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it") and Winston Churchill ("Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it"). Regardless of the version, the statement implies that ignorance of the past makes for a dark future.

Writers such as Eckhart Tolle, on the other hand, caution us to live in "The Now." He argues that focus on the past or future is ego-driven and unwise (*The Power of Now*, 2004, and *A New Earth*, 2005). On a personal, spiritual level, Tolle's advice may be sound, but I wonder whether it serves agencies, policy makers, and organizations such as the Appalachian Studies Association (ASA) who want to make a viable future for the region.

Image by Randy Sanders.

On the ASA website, I found good fodder for discourse about Appalachia's future, especially in the annual conference archives. Except for 1981, all ASA conferences have had a theme, and collectively they tell us what is important to the organization's leadership and membership—community, change, diversity, mountains, culture, place, rural and urban Appalachia, and, not surprising, the future.

In 1978, the first ASA Conference theme had asked the logical question, "Where Do We Go from Here?" In 2008, the Association continued to look forward: "The Road Ahead: The Next Thirty Years of Appalachian Studies." ASA had just completed a two-year strategic planning process, so the theme was—again—logical. Both of these themes may apply to the Association more than to the region; regardless, they suggest that this organization is intentional about Appalachia's future.

In conference themes between 1978 and 2008, the future continued to signify. In 2001, the theme was "Standing on the Mountain, Looking to the Future." Considering that phrase and the year 2001, I immediately thought of Stanley Kubrick and Arthur C. Clark's classic movie (and subsequent novel) *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Their masterpiece was released in 1968, the same year that Martin Luther King delivered his prophetic "mountaintop" speech.

And then I had an epiphany: In the 1960s, as mountaintop removal was gaining the momentum and support to destroy literally the core metaphor of King's speech—the mountaintop—Kubrick and Clark were creating new metaphors for the future—dreams. Their imagined future was a piece of science fiction grounded in the past—in prehistory. These interwoven strands of history and current events and fiction and popular culture had not been apparent to me in 2001 or in 1968, for that matter. They became obvious only after the passage of several decades—only by looking backward from the future.

Next I considered the 1982 and 1986 themes. "Futures: Past and Present" initially struck me as a conundrum. Could there be past and present futures? Could there be plural futures? And then I had a revelation: George Orwell predicted that, indeed, there *could* be. Ironically, these two years straddled the title date of Orwell's futuristic novel *1984*, which is a reversal of the year in which Orwell completed the book—1948. (It was published in 1949.) The 1986 theme—"Contemporary Appalachia: In Search of a Usable Past"—also seemed like a conundrum: What does it mean to have a usable past?

A Usable Past

Orwell's dystopian future requires a malleable, alterable past that is certainly not what ASA conference leaders meant by a "usable past." Orwell's main character, Winston, works in the Ministry of Truth rewriting old news stories to reflect the government's constantly shifting versions of reality. His must "rectify" the past, making it consistent with the present: "This process of continuous alteration was applied not only

to newspapers, but to books, periodicals, pamphlets, posters, leaflets, films, sound tracks, cartoons, photographs—to every kind of literature or documentation which might conceivably hold any political or ideological significance" (39-40).

Winston excels at this task, even enjoys it occasionally, but a simple, critical question nags at him: "How could you communicate with the future?" (6). His answer is to begin a diary, not knowing for whom he is writing it, knowing only that he must. It is, of course, his undoing. In Orwell's future and in every authoritarian society, writing that records independent thought and action, even privately, is dangerous. Why else would the destruction of books be central to so many dystopian novels (*Fahrenheit 451*, 1954) and depictions of Nazi Germany (*The Book Thief*, 2005)? The unalterable printed word is a menace to dictators and tyrants and ideological bullies.

The key word is "unalterable." Preserving "every kind of literature or documentation" in its original content and form also preserves the full range of human thought and action, including compassion, altruism, fallibility, and evil. Edmund Burke is correct: Recorded history represents a usable past because it connects us to the lowest and highest examples of our very humanness and, consequently, helps us understand how to "be."

As Winston struggles to be human—through self-expression, love, a simple paperweight, a private tryst in the woods—he comes to understand that a usable past exists also in the minds and memories of the people, in their humanity: "What mattered were individual relationships, and a completely helpless gesture, an embrace, a tear, a word spoken to a dying man, could have value in itself. The proles, it suddenly occurred to him, . . . had stayed human" (165). Orwell's proletariat—the "proles"—are, ironically, the only citizens who remember the past: the only people alive, thinks Winston, "who could give you a truthful account of conditions in the early part of the century" (87). The proles vaguely remember the old culture, such as songs and children's lore, and though they still have a weak tether to community (they gather at pubs to drink beer, for example), their tether to humanness is vanishing.

Winston believes that the "real" past also exists in "solid objects" (155) such as his diary and his treasured, antique—and prohibited—paperweight. Artifacts of material culture are infused with memory and evoke feeling: clothing, tools, household goods, art—everything from shoes and butter churns to dolls and typewriters. In other words, the stuff of archives and museums.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the "old Appalachian culture" was celebrated through folk festivals and heritage days that featured "old timey ways," but these gatherings have fallen somewhat out of fashion. If demonstrations of quilting, splitting wood, making apple butter, drying apples, baking bread, churning milk, forging horse shoes, crafting furniture, etc. are passé in 2016, how much less important will they be in 2061?

I am not arguing for a revival of these celebrations, but they did serve a good purpose: They connected the present and past through material culture and memory, reminding us of the value of practical knowledge, common sense, and self-reliance—the value of being able to "figure things out" and "do stuff." In *1984*, common sense is the "heresy of heresies" (80). These gatherings may also have exposed a human frailty: "Old timey ways" were synonymous with hard work, and we like a future where machines and government do all the heavy lifting. Orwell's proles fell into this trap.

I believe that people still exist—especially in Appalachia—who can "do stuff": dowse for water, build a barn, make a dress, devise a manual pump, grow potatoes, dry apples, kill and dress a chicken, fry it up, and figure out a use for its feathers. They can "rig up" all sorts of gismos to get the work done without once whipping out a cell phone to Google instructions. Before computers complicated the four-stroke internal combustion engine, every community had such as person in the revered "shade tree mechanic." People like this are a threat to Big Brother and the Party.

Hal and Big Brother

Did works such as *2001* and *1984* foretell the extinction of the shade tree mechanic? Has this community hero been replaced by Kubrick and Clark's computer, Hal 9000? Maybe. Hal is being fully realized in IBM's artificially intelligent Watson, who appeared on *Jeopardy* in 2011 and, more recently, assisted with diagnoses and treatment protocols at the University of North Carolina Cancer Center.

Has Orwell's omniscient, omnipotent Big Brother been realized through technology? I recently sat through a discussion about the benefits of Facebook for businesses: branding a company, tracking customers, and marketing to them based on their Internet activity—all without their knowing it. The person sitting beside me whispered, "Orwell's Big Brother is watching us."

Indeed, he is. Sometimes we applaud him, as when "security" cameras help protect personal property, recover children in Amber Alerts, and identify terrorists. More often we quietly acquiesce to his sinister intrusions: monitoring our Internet activity, e-mails, and

cellphone calls or photographing our earthly property via satellites and drones.

Such acquiescence again brings to mind Orwell's proles. Winston thinks, "If there was hope, it *must* lie in the proles" (69). But he is disappointed. Proles will never—can never—revolt because they are passive and because "The rule of the Party is forever" (261-262).

Making a Viable Appalachian Future

Using Orwell's trick of reversing 1948 to create 1984, I am trying to envision Appalachia in 2061, trying to fathom a strategy to thwart "Party rule" and create a sustainable, humane future. "'Who controls the past,' ran the Party slogan, 'Controls the future: who controls the present controls the past'" (34).

Lest this essay begin to sound like a doomsday alarm or a rallying call to Luddites, let's be clear: The Hals and Watsons *will* shape Appalachia's future, and frankly we are already dependent on them, but they do not have to *be* the future. We do not have to abdicate to them our usable past, our humanity. But how do we coexist with technology and stay human?

1. Read widely in all genres; entertain divergent viewpoints, including ancient and current, regional and universal, liberal and conservative. This reading should embrace conflicting versions of history, from revisionist works to historical fiction.

2. View multiple Appalachian images, historic and current—photographs, motion pictures, documentaries, posters, art, cartoons.

3. Know the organizations that study, document, and interpret the region. Not all of them will resonate with you, and that's as it should be. Only in a dystopian society would all people be expected to embrace all Party-approved organizations.

4. Be savvy about technology. Know how to use it, know how not to be its pawn, and know how to "be" without it.

5. Learn how to "do." Plant a seed, build a fire, cook a meal, climb a mountain, make something—anything—using your brain and hands and feet.

6. Learn how to be comfortable and happy alone, and protect the spaces that are outside the watch of Big Brother. In these private, quiet places, listen to birds and water and wind—listen to your own heartbeat.

7. Keep a diary, write letters, and hold on to the letters you receive. In your Last Will and Testament, bequeath these to an archive.

8. Nurture and sustain Appalachian archives and museums.

9. Revere, honor, and learn from the remaining shade tree mechanics in your community.

10. Venerate "individual relationships, . . . a completely helpless gesture, an embrace, a tear, a word spoken to a dying man" over any security and ease that the Party and technology can provide.

To create a sustainable future for Appalachia, we must live thoughtfully and spiritually in the present moment, as Eckhart Tolle advises. However, living in "the now" does not preclude a firm grasp on a usable past. Perhaps a slight rephrasing of Edmund Burke's cautionary statement is apt: "Those who are out of touch with a usable past will not enjoy a benevolent future." Burke also said, "You can never plan the future by the past," but without that usable past, we have no roadmap. ❖

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The Canaries in Appalachian Coal Mines Were Black

William H. Turner

Four of the last black coal miners in Harlan County, Kentucky (2000). Photo by author.

"You live in a company house
You go to a company school
You work for this company,
according to the company rules.

You all drink company water,
and all use company lights,
The company preacher teaches us
what the company thinks is right."

Carl Sandburg
The Company Towns

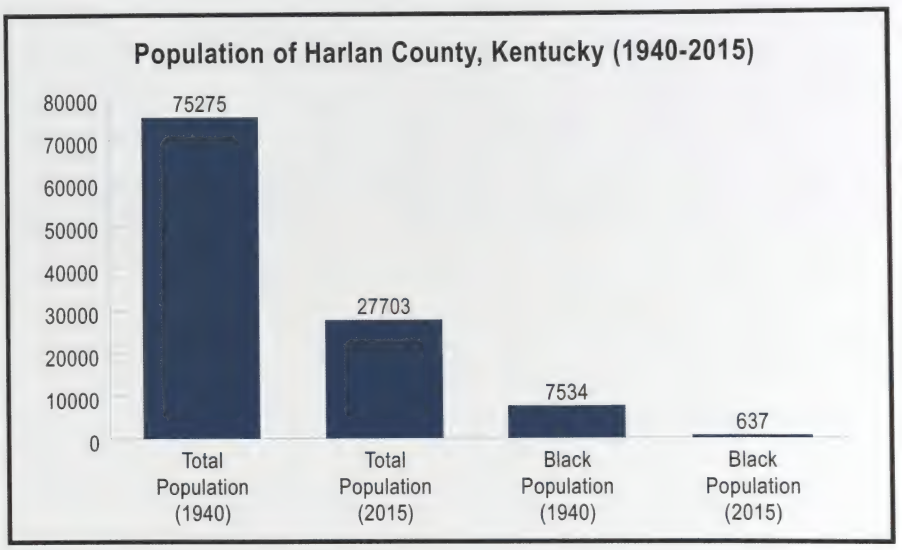
In 1946, when I was born, the technological advances in underground coal mining had advanced to the point where the practice of using a caged canary to detect "bad air" became obsolete; the feathered friend of mineworkers replaced by sensors. Between the start and end of the Great Depression, my father, William Earl Turner, born in 1916, and two of his older brothers, followed their father into the depths of the land where they were born, the land they loved.[1] In 1938, at twenty-two, with eight years' experience under his mining hat in mines near his home in Wise County, Virginia (Coeburn)—where he first saw a coal mine canary; in nearby Grundy, Virginia, and in Matewan, West Virginia—Dad arrived in the "world's largest coal camp," in Lynch, Kentucky, which had been opened in 1917 by U.S. Steel. "The Company," as it was almost always called, provided housing, schools, churches, health care, and recreational facilities, while maintaining patronizingly tight control over all aspects of the politics and economics of the—*their*—town.[2]

At peak times, Dad worked with 4,000 other men on the same job—three shifts a day. Nearly 60% of the members of the United Mine Workers of America nationwide were black when my Dad came to Lynch. Families in our company town had to have fathers and mothers who were married—a company requirement for housing, for social stability. Dad, married to our mother for forty-eight years, the father of ten, died in Lynch in 1987, after four decades working in the mine, ending as a supervisor, *after* filing an employment discrimination suit through the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights in 1970. My first job after college (1968) was with the Commission. Ours was a very typical black family, in a "model coal camp."

Figuratively speaking, black coal miners—when the mechanization of mining hit the fan, so to speak—were human canaries: theirs was the story of what was then the future, the bad air; they were the first to be removed, swept away by the changing winds that swooped through coal mining in Central Appalachia.

Black coal miners in the area's once-booming coalfields were replaced, starting around the time of my birth, by the high-speed advances of other technological advances in mining such as joy loaders and continuous mining machines, not then to include strip mining and mountaintop removal. From the Pocahontas fields centered around places like Gary, Keystone, and Welch, in southern West Virginia; the eastern coalfields of Kentucky, traversing Bell, Harlan, Letcher, Perry, and Pike counties; and in the Big Stone Gap coalfield in far southwest Virginia, in a manner unlike canaries, black coal miners began to "fly off" to futures in what has become the economically stressed Rust Belt—a region to which many blacks (and whites) migrated in the past fifty years. In fact, had the out-migration of whites in the West Virginia coalfields over the past half century matched that of the blacks, there would be no people at all in The Mountain State.[3]

The impact of the mechanization of the industry that supplied *the* energy source for the nation's heat, light, and power, began to be felt in the immediate post-WWII period. While modernization adversely affected *all* miners, since black miners held the jobs that were hardest hit by automation—unskilled hand loading—its effect was harshest on them. By 1960, just as had occurred a half century earlier, when their grandparents left the Deep South (primarily Alabama) for the improved life that the coal industry in Central Appalachia offered, the exodus of blacks from the coalfields began anew, this time for cities in the Midwest, North Central and East Coast states. People my age who were born and raised in coal camps like mine remember—in the sense



Population data courtesy U.S. Census Bureau.

A look down Church Street, a black neighborhood in Lynch, Kentucky (1995). Photo by author.

of archeological memory—the substantial company-owned structures near the mine openings, the commissaries and the well-stocked company stores, and, for some of us, the more-than-adequate company-provided housing, such as the 1,000 homes U.S. Steel built in Lynch.

As a pre-teen in this isolated coal camp without a point of reference, I assumed that *everybody* lived in a multiethnic, multiracial world like my hometown, where there were people who were Spanish, Czech, Polish, Hungarian, English, German, Welsh, Irish, Scottish and Italian. My Dad's mine mate, Mr. Tony Stagnolia, distinguished for me when I was ten years old the difference between what we called a gondola—the coal cars that clanked in and out of the hollow twenty-four seven—from the boats that plied the waters of his father's native Venice.

Up to the immediate post-*Brown v. Board of Education* decision, the mid-1960s, what were uniformly called the "colored schools" that dotted the hills had outstanding faculties and the graduation and college-going rates of blacks were amazingly high. Self-help organizations, churches, mom-and-pop stores, community and civic clubs, and all manner of institutions and organizations flourished in these autonomous black social spaces: all affirmations of a living and dynamic sense of community that flourished, roughly, up to 1960. I grew up in a community—all things racially-segregated considered—which I would wish on any black child whose parents did not finish high school. For a critical mass of us then-considered *disadvantaged* black folk, now baby boomers, life in the well capitalized Appalachian coal camps, 1900 through the middle of the last century—its structure and provisions for steady employment for our father—made our futures bright with hope.

Throughout Central Appalachia's coalfields, for blacks, mountain life and mining work was not a crystal stair during the era of legal segregation that lasted up through the mid-1960s. Racial and economic disparities were pervasive in education, job promotion opportunities, and private enterprise. All-black or all-white sections of coal towns existed until fairly recently, and the supervisors and company administrative officials' jobs were held solely by whites. All of the coal town country clubs were whites-only venues, and schools, dancehalls, and churches were racially exclusive.[4] No big deal then, we didn't know any better, we not only knew what life was like in Harlan County, Kentucky, we knew what was going on in Harlem—New York City—for people with whom we had much in common. *Ebony* and *Jet* magazines—now defunct, for all practical purposes—kept us in touch with other blacks around the world.

The coal seams in Appalachia's central highlands became the

source of enormous wealth over the past century for the few who owned and managed the mines, but most who worked in the mines over the past century were economically hard-pressed. On most quality of life measures, some of the nation's poorest and sickest people live within a one-hundred mile radius of my hometown, and the future of coal mining—as a growth industry—is bleak indeed. A good case can be made that being in Appalachia's forgotten coal camps at the present time is not a good prospect, and even more so in the case of people of color. Not only are the jobs that brought them to the region not likely to return, there are other profound challenges for the few blacks who remain in coalfield towns: welfare and drug dependency, an increasingly alt-right political dynamic, and the opportunities for them to find jobs and to own businesses in a future not dependent on or dominated by the coal mining industry.

Some questions about the future of blacks in former Appalachian coal towns have been raised: What will happen to these communities in the future? Will they just disappear like those old canary birds, or fly away to new lives in other places? Is death for these communities inevitable? What can change agents and grass roots leaders and policy makers do to change that destiny? If these communities are declining, will a future Appalachia be less diverse than the old Appalachia (that would be ironic wouldn't it)? How can (will) the voices of black Appalachia be heard in a new, changing Appalachian future?[5]

Those blacks in Central Appalachian coal camps today who choose to or *have to* remain—and those who return—have a rich history on which to rely; a history deeply rooted in a dogged determination to stay alive and thrive despite the odds and challenges over which they have no control. In a way, *all* people in Appalachia's former coal camps are canaries now. The legacy left by the blacks who kept their hopes alive by working the mines of Central Appalachia is deep. They breathed a lot of "bad air," but they survived—and many thrived—by drawing in courage and faith and exhaling hope to the future generations. ❖

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Collateral Damage

Christopher J. Scalia

Beyond the hill ahead,
A massive tree has dropped across
The ground and lies in leaves and moss,
Diseased, rootless, and dead.

It's difficult to tell
What kind of tree it was: the bark
And foliage that helped set it apart
Have dropped to rot as well.

And look around its path—
The chaos that this fall has wrought,
The scattered limbs, the other timber dropped
Like victims of some wrath.

A sugar maple bends
Against the ground. Its top is trapped
By leprous weight and though it's still intact,
Cracks creep along the stem.

A nearby poplar's split
In thirds: some smashed between the earth
And the other's rootless, rotten girth;
Its trunk is wrecked to splinters,

Its wasted branches bow
Against the crown of an oak that leans
And won't survive: the woods around are green;
These leaves are dry and brown.

So random is the hand
Of death. The oak, unmoored, could doom
A stand of trillium—or find its tomb
On a safe bare patch of land.

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Appalachia, 2016:
Transitioning to the Transition

Anthony Flaccavento

Woodshop crew-member Ashley Wiles works on a home furnishing product made with reclaimed lumber as part of Saw's Edge Woodshop, a social enterprise of Coalfield Development Corporation. Image courtesy CDC.

Where We've Been

A little more than six years ago, I wrote an article for *Solutions Journal* entitled, "The Transition of Appalachia," in which I described a number of innovative enterprises in organic farming, sustainable forestry, and "green" building. Much, though not all of that work continues to this day, and has been joined by many new experiments in creating a stronger, more ecologically sustainable economy in Central Appalachia. It's all part of the urgent and daunting work that Kentuckians for the Commonwealth (KFTC) calls a "just transition." Unfortunately, with most of these past six years preoccupied with the debate about a "war on coal," we haven't made nearly the progress we should have. In fact, we're only just now beginning to transition to transition.

The communities of Central Appalachia have struggled through other economic transitions in recent years, most notably with tobacco farming. Much like the coal industry, the shift away from tobacco played out as both a long-term, slow decline followed by a sudden, steep drop over just a few years. Three key changes precipitated this: first, a decline in demand, as the broader public slowly moved away from smoking, and second, the growth of more cheaply-produced tobacco in other regions. These first two factors were the primary drivers in the long, slow decline of tobacco, as the majority of farmers saw a steady shrinkage in both production quotas and profitability. The third factor was a shift in national policy, in this case, the termination of the federal tobacco program. With that change in 2004, the slow unwinding became a free fall, as more than three-fourths of tobacco farmers stopped growing the crop in the span of less than ten years.

This time of year, it used to be impossible to drive more than a few minutes without seeing fields of tobacco nearing maturity or freshly harvested. Nowadays, you've got to look hard to find a patch. So it is that a good and necessary change at the national

level—reduced tobacco use, and a change in federal policy to support that—has also driven the demise of an industry that had long been a critical part of the region's economy and culture. What's good for public health and the environment, it turns out, isn't always good for businesses and working folks in particular places. That's the story of what happened to tobacco farming, and it's the unfolding story of coal mining in Appalachia. It's also why transitions are so necessary and at the same time, so challenging.

There is one other thing that tobacco and coal have in common—the recognition of the need to make a transition was denied or fought by people who could have made a difference; by elected officials and others in a position to support investment in new economic sectors and opportunities. Many more tobacco farmers might have successfully shifted to other crops or enterprises if support had been forthcoming in the early 1990s. Instead, the sentiment that "nothing can replace tobacco" pretty much remained the official position, until tobacco was all but gone. In the same way, the preoccupation with the "war on coal" has diverted attention, delayed development of alternatives, and undermined investment in new enterprises that might help pave the way towards a vibrant economy far less dependent upon coal. But that may be changing.

Where We Are Now

No single industry will "replace" coal mining, either in terms of overall economic impacts or the average wages paid. There are, however, a range of enterprises emerging, along with strategies to strengthen and expand them, across much of Central Appalachia. Some of the most promising include:

- The Coalfield Development Corporation, working in Wayne, Lincoln and Mingo Counties, West Virginia. Launched in 2010, the CDC is building a "family of social enterprises," according to Executive Director, Brandon Dennison, in construction and deconstruction, solar panel installation, and farming and food businesses. The food sector work includes aspiring farmers producing chicken, pigs, and goats on former strip mined land. The organization provides unemployed folks, especially laid off miners, with thirty-three hours per week of on-the-job training, six hours of classroom instruction, and three hours of life skill development for a period of thirty months. The comprehensive nature of this approach limits the number of participants—they currently have forty "crew members" engaged—but also greatly increases the chances of success. All sixteen of the people who have completed the training to date have jobs in their fields.

- MACED, the Mountain Association for Community Economic Development, continues its long-standing work to develop and support economic transition through entrepreneurial training, small business lending, and work to build up specific economic sectors with strong potential. One of these is in energy efficiency, where the organization is expanding its on-bill financing program that creates jobs in home rehabilitation in energy efficiency, while enabling people of limited means to pay for the improvements through savings on their utility bill.

- Several other organizations are focused on incubating and strengthening emerging businesses that are rooted in the region's land, culture or other assets. Accelerate Appalachia combines entrepreneurial training with peer learning and business mentoring, helping to spawn natural resource-based businesses in eastern Kentucky and beyond. The Friends of Southwest Virginia supports businesses in music, through the Crooked Road, in arts and crafts, through Round the Mountain and the Heartwood Center, and most recently in outdoor recreation and ecotourism, through its Appalachian Spring initiative. The West Virginia Community Development Hub undertakes deep community engagement combined with advocacy for state policies that will help unleash a more sustainable economy. All three of these groups employ what might be termed "targeted incubation," that is, working with specific enterprises that have strong potential for success and which build on, rather than extract the resources of the region.

- An ever-widening array of enterprises, infrastructure and support for healthy local foods has developed, including farmers markets in small towns like St. Paul, Virginia, and Pikeville, Kentucky; community-based retail grocers, such as the Wild Ramp in Huntington, West Virginia, the Boone Street Market, in Jonesborough, Tennessee, and the Green Grocer in Alderson, West Virginia; and expansion of established regional food hubs, most notably the local

food and value-added food sector in southeastern Ohio, led by ACEnet and Rural Action; the development of a coordinated, six state Appalachian food distribution corridor, led by Appalachian Sustainable Development; and the Farmacy partnership, involving the Community Farm Alliance, Mountain Comprehensive Health Corporation and other partners, providing "prescriptions" for farmers market produce to patients with diabetes and other food-related health problems.

These examples are but a small sampling of the innovative enterprises that are emerging, and the community-based support system that is developing around them. Encouragingly, several of the initiatives described above, and others focused on broadband, hardwood-based manufacturing and more, have recently received federal funding through the POWER program.

Where We're Headed

Administered through the Appalachian Regional Commission, in partnership with other federal agencies, the POWER program is unique in two ways. First, the scale of investment is far greater than what most alternative economic development efforts have seen in the past—the average grant is well in excess of one million dollars (ARC has been funding a range of "asset-based development" initiatives for more than a decade, but at much lower levels). Second, the program was borne out of the explicit recognition that coal communities have unique opportunities and problems, and more specifically, that a major return of the Appalachian coal industry was highly unlikely. Recognizing the urgency of the problems while focusing on the economic potential of other assets is a major step forward.

Some elected officials and government agencies are beginning to recognize this as well. In Kentucky, Shaping our Appalachian Region, or SOAR emerged in 2013 when Republican Congressman, Hal Rodgers joined forces with Democratic Governor, Steve Brashear to publicly acknowledge the need to build a less coal-dependent economy in eastern Kentucky. To be sure, this came about in part because of the severity of the economic crisis in the region, a "coal bust that seems more real, more permanent," as Brandon Dennison put it. But it also emerged because of grass roots pressure to get beyond the polarizing and paralyzing "war on coal" narrative. And perhaps most importantly, because of the emergence of scores of enterprises and organizations beginning to bring a just transition to life. Private funders, particularly the Appalachian Funders Network, had recognized the promise of these new initiatives and begun investing in them several years earlier.

It's easy to be discouraged about the potential to make a just transition to an economy that better serves people and the land in Central Appalachia. Perhaps, though, we can take heart in the story of Whitesville, West Virginia. Stephanie Tyree, director of the West Virginia Community Development Hub, remembers the extreme tension she witnessed between mining families and environmentalists when she visited Whitesville a few years back. But when she returned in 2015, a packed community meeting was filled with people prepared to move forward, ready to work together to address real needs and build their community. By the middle of 2016, the community had successfully opened a much needed local grocery store, creating some jobs and making healthier foods more accessible.

According to Tyree, there's been a shift in thinking the last couple of years, where the idea of "economic transition" is no longer so radical. "With change coming from the ground up, the coal industry has lost control of the narrative," she says. "We're starting to see a new narrative, led by community members themselves." While that surely is not the case in every part of the region, the combination of successful new enterprises, increased investment, and a new community narrative is enough to give us hope for a just transition, finally, in Appalachia.❖

Anthony Flaccavento is an organic farmer in the Appalachian region of Virginia and author of *Building a Healthy Economy from the Bottom Up: Harnessing Real World Experience for Transformative Change*. His consulting business, SCALE, Inc, works with communities around the world to help build healthier, more sustainable economies.

The Future of Appalachia:
A Scenario

Tim Ezzell

DOOR of HOPE
FAITH HOPE CHARITY 1-COR. 13:13
WHO DELIVERED US FROM SO GREAT A DEATH AND DOTH DELIVER: IN WHOM WE TRUST THAT HE WILL YET
DELIVER US; 2 COR 1-10
HOLY GHOST SERVICE 3 00 P.M.
ALL RACES ARE WELCOME
400
REVIVAL SERVICE
JESUS
RANSOM
PRAYERS INTERCESSIONS 12: WED.

The current Appalachian trend toward urban growth/rural exodus will likely continue into the future. Macon, Mississippi, for example, saw an estimated 5.5% decrease in population between 2010-2015. "The Door of Hope" in Macon. Photo by author.

Appalachians sometimes have a difficult relationship with the future. We celebrate our past and hold fast to tradition while, for understandable reasons, we often view the future with trepidation. In areas where hope is sometimes in short supply, the future may even seem unworthy of consideration. Yet, the future can also hold great promise and building a brighter tomorrow requires considerable contemplation and discussion today. One way to help imagine and understand the future is through the use of scenarios.

A scenario is not a prediction of the future. It is, instead, a projection of current trends to a defined point in time in the future. Scenarios are often used by policy-makers to help determine potential outcomes resulting from contemporary policies and decisions. Using scenarios, decision makers can craft better policies in the present time that may lead to better outcomes in future decades. Typical scenarios are projected twenty to fifty years in the future, but some scenarios may extrapolate trends even further. This scenario will evaluate possible outcomes twenty-five to thirty years from the present.

A number of trends must be considered when developing a scenario for the Appalachian region. These include demographic trends (urbanization, diversity, inmigration and outmigration); economic trends (energy sector changes, globalization, technological innovations); social trends (changes in gender roles, race relations, religious affiliation); political changes (party affiliations, changing priorities); and even environmental or geophysical trends (climate change,

disease, pollution). Scenario writers may also consider so-called "wild card" events. These might include negative events (natural disasters, epidemics, conflict) or positive events (innovations, economic windfalls, political reforms). By including windfalls, policy makers can determine the resilience and sustainability of current decisions.

In evaluating current regional trends, the following changes merit consideration:

- Urbanization and demographic changes
- Globalization
- The decline of coal and the rise of fracking and other energy sources
- Increased reliance on information technology and the Internet
- Changing attitudes related to diversity
- Climate change
- Changing political priorities

Based on these, we can project the following outcomes for the Appalachian region.

Appalachia Will Become More Urban

In the coming decades Appalachia will follow the national trend towards urbanization. A number of factors will drive this change. Foremost among these will be access to economic opportunity. As rural opportunities decline, residents of the region will move to cities to seek better jobs and a better quality of life. Other factors, however, may also play a role. Improved access to education, healthcare, and digital services will likely attract people to regional cities and suburban communities. Improvements in transportation will help facilitate this trend. Ironically, roads built to improve access to rural communities may contribute to the exodus from these areas.

Appalachia has, of course, witnessed outmigrations in its past. Thousands of residents left the region during World War I, World War II, and the post-war era to seek better lives in large industrial cities. This next wave of urbanization, however, will likely look much different. Census flows and migration studies suggest that residents now choose to move to cities within the region rather than to places like Detroit and Chicago. While much of this growth will take place in large established urban areas like Knoxville, Charleston, and Birmingham, small cities may experience dramatic growth. This may prove especially true along interstate corridors, such as I-75 and I-81. London, Kentucky, for example, grew by more than 40% since 2000, and Morristown, Tennessee, expanded almost 17% in the same time span.

This urban growth will have a dichotomous impact on the region. Relocation to larger cities will create new and expanded opportunities for residents, including improved schools and small business and employment possibilities. These urban centers will also provide better access to capital, healthcare, and quality of life amenities. At the same time, the associated exodus from rural areas will prove detrimental to small communities. These areas will continue to lose residents, particularly among youth and young adults. As a result, some small rural communities will effectively "die."

Appalachia Will Become More Diverse

In recent decades, Appalachia has become increasingly diverse. Today, even small regional cities can claim a Chinese restaurant or a Latino grocer. Urbanization across the region will increase this trend. Growing cities will not only attract new residents from inside the region, they will also draw migrants from other areas and other nations. Declining land values in rural areas may also prove attractive to immigrant populations seeking entrepreneurial opportunities.

These changes will, in the long term, result in the enrichment of the region's culture and economy. They may, however, prove challenging in the near term. This is especially true in long-homogenous rural areas, which may have difficulty adapting to new races, ethnicities, faiths, and identities. Diverse urban environments may also challenge new rural immigrants and increase feelings of alienation.

"As rural opportunities decline, residents of the region will move to cities to seek better jobs and a better quality of life."

The Decline of the Coal Industry Will Continue Unabated

Increased competition, declining markets, the exhaustion of readily accessible coal resources will all contribute to the continued decline

of Appalachian coal. Political and regulatory pressures related to climate change will exacerbate this trend. While mining operations will continue on a limited scale throughout the coming century, they will probably never return to twentieth century levels of production. Increased mechanization will further erode mining labor demands, leading to a relative paucity of future coal-related jobs.

This trend will be devastating to portions of Central Appalachia and will contribute to the urbanization of the region and the decline or smaller rural communities. Many of these towns will be unable to sustain their populations without coal and lack the developable space, workforce skills, and infrastructure for other industries. As a result, the number of dying towns in the coalfields will probably increase. This trend may also impact urban areas, who might struggle to provide affordable housing and healthcare, schools, and employment to these displaced populations.

Appalachia Will Become More Unequal

These trends will exacerbate social and economic inequality across the Appalachian region. The distinctions between urban and suburban residents and rural populations will perhaps become more striking as incomes and the qualities of schools, healthcare, and opportunities become more divergent. Growing urban populations will concentrate even more political power in cities and suburbs, perhaps drawing much-needed resources away from distressed areas. Investment and policies will favor the needs of these urban areas to the detriment of smaller and more rural areas. This, in turn, will further outmigration from the countryside, resulting in a cycle of urban growth and rural decline, until—eventually—creating a rural population largely composed of people who cannot leave and those who render necessary services to them.

Potential Wildcard Events

The preceding scenario is, of course, not inevitable. It could, for example, be changed by any number of potential events. These could include the following:

Energy Sector Changes

Events, as in past decades, could lead to changes in current energy trends. A major nuclear accident, concerns about fracking impacts, new technologies, or global market changes could—for a time—increase demand to Appalachian coal resources.

Global Events

Conflicts or instability in other nations could lead to the reshoring of some manufacturing industries and a revival of some regional manufacturing. Political changes in China, conflict between India and Pakistan, or civil wars in Latin America, for example, could lead to a temporary revival of Appalachian textile or low-skill assembly jobs.

Domestic Political and Policy Changes

Changes in national priorities and leadership could impact the region in both positive and negative ways. Political pressures could, for example, result in the elimination of the Appalachian Regional Commission, thus depriving communities of important resources. Likewise, future administrations could prioritize infrastructure, creating opportunities for these areas.

Technological Changes

A number of emerging technological changes could impact the region. Changes in wireless or satellite broadband technologies could increase economic opportunities in the region. Additive manufacturing could create opportunities for small-scale rural production.

Impacts from Climate Change

Rising sea levels, higher temperatures, water shortages, and an increase in severe climate events could alter the economies and demographics of the Sun Belt. The ready availability of affordable and temperate Appalachian property could unexpectedly increase the population of some parts of the region.

Interventions

Public interventions can also help change the trends driving this scenario. Examples of public interventions could include the following:

"Policies and changes made today can effectively change regional trajectories, resulting in a more prosperous and equitable region."

A Major National Program Investment

Just as the space program transformed much of north Alabama, a twenty-first century "moon shot" could radically change Central Appalachia. This massive influx of talent, capital, and hope—even for a few decades—could permanently change the economic and social landscape of the embattled subregion.

Changes in Telecom Policy

The Rural Electrification Act, passed in 1936, revolutionized rural life in the United States by extending electricity to farms and outlying areas. This effort, which significantly improved rural living standards, recognized affordable electricity as a necessity and not a luxury. A similar policy shift, directed at broadband and telecommunications, could likewise increase opportunity and improve the quality of life in less populated areas.

A New Homestead Act

In recent decades, a number of elected officials and policy experts have discussed the creations of a New Homestead Act. Just as the original Homestead Act encouraged development of rural areas, this new act would promote the redevelopment of these communities through home subsidies and increased educational and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Conclusion

Current trends do not bode well for parts of Appalachia, at least in the short term. Central Appalachia, particularly the Coal Belt, faces a difficult and uncertain future. These same trends, however, look more favorable for the region's cities and major corridors. These areas appear to have significant growth opportunities in the coming decades. This growth may, to some degree, ameliorate some of the difficulties confronting less populated areas. Furthermore, as with all scenarios, these outcomes are not absolute. Policies and changes made today can effectively change regional trajectories, resulting in a more prosperous and equitable region. This better future is within our collective grasp, provided we, as a nation, have the vision, will, and wisdom to pursue it.❖

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Investing in Appalachia's Future:
A Look at the Appalachian Regional Commission's New Strategic Plan (2016-2020)

Photo by Charlie Warden.

***Now & Then* Editor's Note:** *2015 was a year of both retrospection and looking ahead for the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). Founded in 1965, the ARC celebrated its fiftieth year in 2015 but also spent the year completing a new strategic plan. In the previous issue of* Now & Then, *four Appalachian scholars discussed an ARC report that examined how the ARC had affected the Appalachian region during its fifty-year history, entitled* Appalachia Then and Now: Examining Changes to the Appalachian Region Since 1965. *This report was the first step in the development of ARC's new strategic plan, which was implemented in 2016. This document replaced the previous strategic plan, which was entitled* Moving Appalachia Forward (2011-2016).

ARC worked with local, state, and regional partners to develop the new strategic plan, which included five listening sessions and nine focus groups in the Region, and a Region-wide public survey, gathering input from more than 3,000 Appalachians. In this article, we share key excerpts from the ARC strategic plan, highlighting ARC's vision for its engagement with Appalachia over the next five years. We also point out several significant changes in wording from the previous ARC plan.

Investing in Appalachia's Future: The Appalachian Regional Commission's Five-Year Strategic Plan for Capitalizing on Appalachia's Opportunities (2016-2020)

Appalachia is a Region of Great Opportunity

For 50 years, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) has invested in the efforts of its local, regional, and state partners to transform Appalachian communities and advance its mission of helping the Region achieve socioeconomic parity with the rest of the nation. These efforts have laid a foundation on which to build in pursuing current opportunities and in creating and strengthening the building blocks of future opportunities. Since 1965, ARC has made nearly 25,000 targeted investments and invested more than $3.8 billion in the Region. These investments were matched by $9 billion in other federal, state, and local funding sources. Since 1978, when ARC began tracking leveraging data, every dollar invested by ARC has leveraged an average of $6.40 from the private sector.

ARC's Vision

Appalachia is a region of great opportunity that will achieve socio-economic parity with the nation.

***N&T* Note:** *The vision statement in the previous ARC plan did not include the opening phrase in the above statement, which makes Appalachia as a "region of great opportunity" a key point of emphasis in the current plan.*

ARC Investment Can Address the Challenges Associated with Economic Transition

Despite progress, continued investment is needed. The Appalachian Region's economy has historically been dominated by a few industries, including mining, textiles, tobacco, and timber. Dependence on these industries as economic drivers and employers has left many communities, particularly those in the most economically distressed counties, vulnerable to economic fluctuations as their businesses face increasing competition, specialization, and market changes. This includes the need for:

- More Jobs
- Higher Educational Attainment
- More Investment to Improve Health Status
- More Investment in Areas of Persistent and Severe Economic Distress

ARC's Mission

Innovate, partner, and invest to build community capacity and strengthen economic growth in Appalachia.

***N&T* Note:** *This mission is expanded a bit from the previous ARC mission statement, which read as follows: ARC's mission is to be a strategic partner and advocate for sustainable community and economic development in Appalachia.*

Strategic Investment Goals

1. **Economic Opportunities**
   Invest in entrepreneurial and business development strategies that strengthen Appalachia's economy.

2. **Ready Workforce**
   Increase the education, knowledge, skills, and health of residents to work and succeed in Appalachia.

3. **Critical Infrastructure**
   Invest in critical infrastructure—especially broadband; transportation, including the Appalachian Development Highway System; and water/wastewater systems.

4. **Natural and Cultural Assets**
   Strengthen Appalachia's community and economic development potential by leveraging the Region's natural and cultural heritage assets.

5. **Leadership and Community Capacity**
   Build the capacity and skills of current and next-generation leaders and organizations to innovate, collaborate, and advance community and economic development.

***N&T* Note:** *These goals reflect a broader range than the four goals in the previous ARC strategic plan, which focused on job creation and per capita income, capacity to compete in a global economy, developing and improving infrastructure, and building the Appalachian Development Highway System.*

ARC's Commitment

At all levels, ARC is committed to investing organizational and financial resources in ways that:

- Are strategic and encourage alignment of projects with the goals of community and regional plans.
- Encourage and reward collaborative efforts to achieve common ends, with specific focus on connecting economically distressed counties and areas to Region-wide economic opportunities.
- Achieve the greatest impact possible, leveraging ARC's limited resources to bring more resources into the Region.
- Hold ARC, its partners, and its grantees accountable for achieving performance targets and helping Appalachia prosper.

***N&T* Note:** *This statement of commitment is a new section, which was not included in the previous ARC plan.* ❖

A copy of the complete ARC Strategic Plan is available for download on the ARC website: www.arc.gov

Revisiting the Future of Appalachia

Rebecca Adkins Fletcher and William Schumann

By any standards, the Appalachian Mountains are ancient. As some of the oldest land formations on the planet, the mountains have roughly 500 million years of history embedded in the ridges, valleys, and plateaus. It is precisely due to the age, topography, and climate of the mountains that Appalachia is nearly unrivaled globally in its biodiversity of life forms. It is for a much smaller period of time, about 12,000 years, that diverse groups of people have lived in these same mountains as hunters and gatherers, small-scale farmers, and modern industrialists. Many of these adaptations have become more iconic than others in American popular culture—the "European pioneer" often comes to mind—but the modern reality is much richer and more complex. Indeed, we have reached a point where the future of Appalachia must be carefully considered in terms of these diversities and variations. It is that task of considering Appalachia's future that makes one mindful of the region's "big" history: its global significance over time; the broad integration of natural history and human history; and the roles of various groups in the creation of "Appalachia" as a cultural and political region. This confluence of human interactions within specific environments over time creates cultural conceptions of "place." We are certainly in a circumstance of "a new normal" representing shifting sets of relations between the natural and cultural environments in which we now live. Gazing into the future of Appalachian places, we are mindful that productive and inclusive planning of a re-envisioned region requires that we reconcile our own place in the process. This includes a great many people—regional residents, citizens, scholars, activists, stake holders, and neighbors—responding out of necessity to the sometimes contradictory needs of life and livelihood in modern global Appalachia.

Appalachia Revisited: New Perspectives on Place, Tradition, and Progress examines the "place" of Appalachia as a continuously recreated site of diverse human practices within changing environmental and historical circumstances. Place, moreover, is connected to "place-making," or the actual production of popular and academic knowledge that establishes Appalachia as a distinctive cultural, economic, and ecological region. The contributors to this volume focus on Appalachian place and place-making in relation to theories, methods, and comparative contexts that help to situate contemporary Appalachia and contemporary Appalachian scholarship in wider conversations. The text is not exhaustive of all of the issues facing Appalachia in the twenty-first century, but it does present a diverse survey of topics, writing styles, research approaches, and conceptual models that demonstrate the heterogeneity of region scholarship. Representing the humanities and social sciences, including academic and applied work, chapters address issues of regional health, environment, race, ethnicity, gender, economic development and tourism, linguistic and cyber identities, energy policies, prisons, activism and organizing, educational engagement, farming, and politics. Together, they trace an "Appalachian map" made up of dialectical speech networks, artistic performances, institutional relations, ecological communities, political and consumer practices, and virtual representations that must be a part of any discussions that are serious about building a more representative and just Appalachian society.

Drawing from a sense of place in terms of geographical and political boundaries, I (Rebecca) used the 2014 chemical spill in Charleston, West Virginia, as a way to think about place-making and my own sense of connection to place through which to evaluate ideas of pollution, relative exposure, health effects, and defined space outcomes of the chemical spill. Importantly, this disaster forced me to make connections in a more succinct and specific way than I had before, in understanding how Appalachia is intricately and holistically linked within, not isolated from, the rest of America and the world, reflecting a broader view of regional continuity and change. It was in the loss of safe water for drinking and other life activities that the boundary between the natural and cultural worlds faded away, harkening the need to create a future in Appalachia where choices of life and livelihood are not oppositional.

I (William) began thinking about Appalachian place through a series of community-based projects and

At A Glance (Relief Print) by Brian S. Fletcher. Image courtesy artist.

interactions I've had in Southern, Central, and Northern Appalachia since the late 1990s. I have seen first-hand how different stakeholders participate to negotiate local meanings, strategies, and future visions of their communities and regions. Like Rebecca, I witnessed many instances where the "local" was inexorably linked to the "global." Interestingly, it was also the Elk River spill she mentions that helped me articulate the importance of place-making in this process. At the time (early 2014), I was confined to a hospital bed recovering from an injury. As a captive audience, I was able to watch hours of news coverage on this tragedy. Over time, I began to analyze how the subtleties of news reporting shaped what viewers knew of Appalachian places—for example, the degree to which the chemical spill was connected to wider patterns of under-regulation and neglect in coalfield economies. I ultimately relied on this experience, i.e. both the event and how it was "made" in the media, to frame

the opening of *Appalachia Revisited.* It was one of many instances in Appalachia in which the local was interpenetrated by the global and vice-versa.

Although it is many things, globalization is ultimately about crossing borders—regional, national, and cultural. Appalachia is no longer understood as a peripheral region but as vibrantly inter-connected to the U.S. and the world. As demonstrated in the chapters in this volume, the stories of globalization and of border crossings hinge on the (re)drawing of geographical and cultural maps that simultaneously and symbolically ally some regions and groups together while hiding connections to others. Unfortunately, however, as author Emily Satterwhite points out in her book *Dear Appalachia: Readers, Identity, and Popular Fiction since 1978,* the popular assumption and stereotyping of Appalachia as a land and people separated from modernity remains too prevalent in popular imagination. As the chapters by Ooten and Sawyer, Kant-Byers, Puckett, and Blackburn indicate, the links between identity, place, and economics are constructed by groups in ways with measurable economic and political outcomes. Over the years, many well-intentioned efforts to eradicate poverty have followed the assumption that poverty results from being left behind, from failing to progress, from failed cultural scripts. In actuality, poverty in the modern world often results from the uneven investment and extraction of resources (including human capital) and the ironic conflation of development and destruction (Ooten and Sawyer; Yahn). The cases presented within *Appalachia Revisited* by Loeffler and King; Ezelle; Piser; and Puckett demonstrate that Appalachian innovation and activism might well be viewed as a type of "global commodity." We see in Appalachia models for applying place-based knowledge in effective and just ways. As Herbert Reid and Betsy Taylor argue in their book, *Recovering the Commons: Democracy, Place, and Global Justice,* understanding and sharing place-based knowledge is crucial in struggles for global social justice. While many of the most grievous injustices challenging people the world over today result from the worst of global processes, we also see the best of globalization in the utilization of technology as a means to sharing place-based knowledge between peoples from one place to another.

It is through storytelling, poetry, art, and music that we learn those first lessons of love of home (place). It is through such artistry that we share and create identities and make livelihoods from the reinterpreting of images of place. We learn not only of the actions of important people, but these stories *take place* in spaces that are as integral to the telling as the characters themselves. For example, Appalachia becomes more than mere subject matter in artistic renderings of mountain scenery; it becomes a symbolic character that tells a particular story of nostalgia and connection (Kant-Byers). Music allows us to transform and transport ourselves, altering identity and reshaping (remapping) ideas of belonging. In this way music allows for the reinterpreting of ethnic identity through performance, rhythm, and rhyme. As Barbour-Payne describes, the sounds of the Carolina Chocolate Drops are not limited to the binaries of black and white. Indeed, music and performance transcend racial-cultural barriers, becoming a focal point for global discourse regarding Affrilachian and Appalachian identities.

We hope that these examinations of Appalachia as a place (as well as a place that is "made") will invite broader reflection on how different communities and stakeholders in Appalachia can come together to discuss interconnections, including opportunities across groups to revisit and redefine the region. As profound as the challenges are, we believe that the contributors to our volume demonstrate the potential for new solutions through new ways of revisiting our past and present. In turn, we see these perspectives as encouraging further discussion about how we can all contribute to a sustainable future for our region.❖

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William Schumann, a cultural anthropologist, is director of the Center for Appalachian Studies at Appalachian State University.

The Minnie Shook Place

Glenda Barrett

In the same place where
Grandma and I baited
hooks and cast our lines
in the dark green water
under the small bridge,
where water snakes tried
to eat our fish on stringers,
where we lost hooks and sinkers
in the top of willow trees,
the same place we had picnics
of Vienna sausage and soda crackers
with no greater concern than
whether a fish was on our line,

In the same place now stands
red, flashing lights, slowing traffic,
while a larger bridge is being built.
To the side of it sits five condos
wedged together side by side
with a sandy beach in front.
If Grandma was alive now
and could see this sight,
she'd wrinkle her brow,
and shake her head slowly
before saying to me, *Glenda,*
what in tarnation have they done
to our fishing hole?

Published in *When the Sap Rises* (Finishing Line Press, 2008)

Glenda Barrett, a native of north Georgia where she still lives, is an artist, poet and writer. Her work has appeared in *Journal of Kentucky Studies*, *Barely South Review*, *Nantahala Review* and many other journals and anthologies.

Climate Change in Appalachia:

A Study Shows That Appalachia May Provide a "Stronghold" of Natural Resilience—but Don't Get Complacent; or, What Happens When the Chickadees Run Out of Mountain

Kevin O'Donnell

Photo by James Edgar.

Initially, the headline appears to offer a glimmer of good news. "Nature Conservancy Study Shows Appalachian Mountains To Be A Climate Change 'Stronghold'."

That is the title of a June 2012 news report by Russell McLendon on the Mother Nature Network website. A student in a class I am teaching at East Tennessee State University, on a September afternoon in 2016, has projected the article onto the 4x6 foot screen at the front of the classroom. Sunlight filters through spaces between the slats of closed window blinds at the far side of the room. Beneath the headline, on screen, sprawls a stock photo of a gorgeous Appalachian mountain scene, apparently taken in the southern highlands from an aircraft in midsummer. The caption below the photo reads:

> "A new study suggests the Appalachian Mountains are resilient to droughts, heat waves, and other effects of climate change."

I am teaching an honors reading and writing course. The course centers around the broad topic of global warming. As you might imagine, happy news has been in short supply in this classroom, especially in this particular year. You may already know that global average temperatures recently have been going through the roof. 2014 was the hottest year on record. 2015 crushed 2014. And 2016 is on track to crush 2015. Fourteen of the fifteen hottest years have occurred since 2000. (See "Think It's Hot Now? Just Wait," by Heidi Cullen, in the August 20 *New York Times*, for a compelling analysis, as well as complete documentation.)

Class discussions have thus touched on a seemingly endless procession of grim reports and prognostications: flood, drought, ocean acidification, coastal inundation, and—one of my favorite new terms, "dust bowlification." A NASA study released in 2015 projects that, if CO_2 emission rates remain on their current upward trajectory, then by the end of the century, soil moisture averages throughout most of the Great Plains, the U.S. Southwest, Mexico and Central America will be lower than the averages recorded in the Great Plains during the 1930s Dust Bowl period.

In other words, NASA is saying that, before some people now living pass from this earth, Central America, Mexico, and large swaths of the U.S. will become dustbowlified.

As part of the class requirements, students are reading Elizabeth Kolbert's *The Sixth Extinction*, the winner of the 2015 Pulitzer Prize in General Nonfiction. That book relays how, over the course of its four-and-some billion year history, our planet has experienced five major extinction events. And now it is experiencing a sixth. Yes, as you may have heard, the globe is currently undergoing a major die-off of flora and fauna. Furthermore, Kolbert demonstrates persuasively that, as one of her subtitles put it, "the cataclysm is us." The hypothesis, which is gaining widespread acceptance among scientists in a variety of disciplines, is that the cause of the Sixth Extinction is one particularly adaptable species of hairy biped. The same species that possesses the imaginative capacity to represent the world in signs and symbols, it turns out, has the corresponding capacity to change that world irrevocably, and perhaps to destroy it.

Thus, five weeks into the semester, we in the class have already discussed predictions of large-scale migrations of climate refugees marching northward through North America by the end of the century. (If the NASA soil-moisture projections do, indeed, come to pass, likely more than 100 million people will be displaced by the aforementioned dust-bowlification.) Students in the class have further gone on to discuss—get this—the possibility that we may be the last generation of humans to catch fish in large numbers because the world's oceans will be depleted by the year 2100. (Google the 2012 BBC report for the depressing details.) We've gone so far as to talk in class about what species might replace homo sapiens, in the entirely conceivable if probably quite distant event that the planet does, indeed, become uninhabitable for us. (The leading candidate: giant rats. Or, to be more precise, rat-like creatures of variable sizes. Paleobiologist Jan Zalasciewicz contends that rats and their successors will be best positioned to occupy the ecospace that would open up, were humans to fade into oblivion.)

I have been emerging from the classroom every Tuesday and Thursday moderately stunned by the bleakness of it all. Yet I have to say that the students, to their great credit, encounter the relentless bad news in this class with endless good cheer. Perhaps because they've grown up with catastrophe looming, these twenty-year-olds—the post-9/11, *Game of Thrones* generation—seem comfortable with, or perhaps, rather, numbed to, the idea that cataclysm is ever ready to descend, be it by means of fire or ice.

Nevertheless, like me, the students still seem eager to pounce on the good news from the Mother Nature Network which is now projected up on the big screen in class. The student presenting the article is preparing for a research project with the working title "Climate Change in Appalachia." She has found the article with the help of a quick web search and a Huffington Post link, and has brought it up on screen for discussion. Further digging reveals the back story: The Eastern Division of the Nature Conservancy has been working for years on a multi-million dollar "Resilience Analysis" for the eastern U.S. The 2012 news report concerns the completion of the first phase of the Nature Conservancy analysis, which focuses on the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic region. A second phase of the study, focusing on the Southeast, was completed in September 2014.

That second study is entitled "Resilient Sites for Terrestrial Conservation in the Southeast Region." The study is designed to help conservationists confront the fact that, as the planet warms, as

"I HAVE BEEN EMERGING FROM THE CLASSROOM EVERY TUESDAY AND THURSDAY MODERATELY STUNNED BY THE BLEAKNESS OF IT ALL."

habitats change, plant and animal species distributions are likewise changing in unpredictable ways. The question is: how do you maximize biodiversity in the future, if you don't know exactly where different plants and animals are going to want to live? The answer is to identify "resilient" sites. The study team used newly developed digital tools to map the region's geophysical characteristics, including geophysical diversity, topographical complexity, and local connectedness and natural cover. It likewise mapped current biodiversity, based on information about the locations of rare species and natural communities. The result of all this work is the 2014 report, and a "Resilient Lands Mapping Tool," which will help conservationists to acquire a "conservation portfolio" that should maximize the amount of biodiversity preserved in the future, in the face of the fact that species distribution will change in unpredictable ways.

So what makes Appalachia a good region for "strongholds" of resilience? Pretty much what you might expect: First of all, according to the NASA predictions, the Appalachian region should be able to avoid the worst of the chronic drought expected in Central and North America by the end of this century. Take a look at the NASA map that illustrates projected moisture levels for the year 2095. (Available here: www.nasa.gov/press/2015/february/nasa-study-finds-carbon-emissions-could-dramatically-increase-risk-of-us.) The color brown indicates dust-bowl levels of dryness. As you'll see, much of North America is covered brown, on the map. However, a hopeful crescent of light blue appears along the Appalachian range, indicating that our region is not expected to be hit too badly.

More important, according to the Nature Conservancy study, the variable altitudes in the mountains provide ecological resilience. As the planet warms, variable terrain will allow both plant and animal species a chance to "micro-migrate"—basically, to climb up to cooler areas if they need to. This second aspect of Appalachian natural resilience already makes intuitive sense to me. As I mention during class discussion, I already know, from Tim Silver's *Mount Mitchell and the Black Mountains: An Environmental History* (2004), that some migrating bird species, for example, including the Carolina wren and the Carolina chickadee, spend their entire year on Mount Mitchell, merely moving up and down elevations as the seasons change. This is what the study means by a resilient landscape.

Another resilient characteristic of the Appalachian mountain range—the conservancy study views that range broadly, from the southern highlands, to the Adirondacks, and on up to the high mountains of New England—is that, compared to other regions in the eastern U.S., this region has high rates of undeveloped land, including vast stretches of public lands owned by the good ol' USDA Forest Service. This undeveloped land allows for high "permeability"—movement of species which would otherwise be interrupted by roads, buildings, and other elements of human settlement.

The author's class discusses global warming in Appalachia. Photo by James Edgar.

Here is how the 2014 Nature Conservancy report describes the resulting "strongholds":

> Natural strongholds are places where the direct effects of climate change are moderated by complex topography and connected natural cover, and where the current landscape contains high quality biodiversity features. Natural strongholds can serve as a bridge to grant safe passage into the future for thousands of species.

The research project, and the corresponding "Resilient Lands

Mapping Tool"—maps.tnc.org/resilientland—are part of an effort to guide the Nature Conservancy and its affiliates, during the decades to come. The goal is to prioritize the conservation of lands that will allow for natural resilience. It is a very smart approach: The report will help conservationists decide where best to spend resources. The initiative is important—truly visionary, there's no question.

However, the more we read about the project, in my classroom—and the more these college students discuss it—the more the initiative starts to feel like a kind of last-ditch effort. Sure, this conservation plan will help slow down species loss, as the planet inevitably warms. The regional director of conservation science with the Nature Conservancy, Mark Anderson, puts it this way: Appalachian conservation strongholds "could serve as breeding grounds and seed banks for many animal and plant species that otherwise may be unable to find habitat due to climate change." Breeding grounds and seed banks are great. But they don't sound like long term solutions.

So, as the class period draws to a close, the question repeatedly arises: What happens when the planet keeps warming, as it is projected to do if CO_2 emissions continue unabated? Put another way, what happens when the wrens and chickadees get to the top of the mountain and the temperatures still keep rising?

I understand and respect that the conservationist's job is to be hopeful and forward looking. I support the nature conservancy resilience plan wholeheartedly. Nevertheless, the phrase "safe passage into the future," in the passage cited above from the report, is awfully misleading. There is no "bridge to grant safe passage into the future" if that future is, in turn, an ice sheet that continues to break apart. In the meantime, there's still that nagging question of what will happen with those 100 million refugees from Central America and Mexico that we're leaving for our children and grandchildren to deal with.

As the class period wraps up, I turn off the projector and open the blinds on the far wall, to reveal a heart-achingly beautiful early fall afternoon outside. The students chatter and laugh amongst themselves as they disperse into the sunlight. My own thoughts are a bit grim, nevertheless. On the one hand, I'm glad that—for now, at least—my children live in these resilient mountains. On the other hand, all I can think, as I pull the classroom door shut, is let us not allow these mountains to make us complacent!❖

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Last Light

Kathryn Stripling Byer

The tests I need to pass are prescribed by the spirits
of place who understand travel but not amnesia.

from "This Is My Third and Last Address to You"—Adrienne Rich

1.

Almost the age when memory falters,
I fear being made to count backward
by sevens, to answer to date, year, and
Presidents, as if those numbers and names
matter more in the end than this place
where I stand at the same kitchen window,
observing the same pines set swaying by wind,
reaching upward as I'll reach, come morning,
my arms to the ceiling, breathing the dark out
of body and spirit, exhaling that old dream
of nothingness: laying my head down to sleep.

2.

Now Rocky Face Ridge catches fire
in the last light and, though I can't hear it
from where I stand, Cullowhee Creek tumbles into
the Tuckaseegee, always unscrolling beneath me
the names I already know. *Snowbird.*
Buzzards Roost. Weyahutta. Oconaluftee.

3.

I don't know how long names can last
if there's no one to care where they live.
What I saw on the hairpin curve down from
the Chimney Tops, white as snow, I've not forgotten.
Phacelia. And how, on the trail leading
up to the summit of Suncota Ridge,
I saw sauntering toward me a young woman
I could have sworn was the reincarnation of
every spring wildflower ever named anywhere.

4.

Closer she comes to me each April,
as if she means more than I have a lifetime
to know. Roundabout her, her white Easter dress
whispers every thing I want to keep living
here in this valley that cups the last swallow of light,
every name I must reach to remember or else
lose them, hillside by hillside, to darkness.

Published in *Descent* (LSU Press, 2012)

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The Future of Appalachia: Health

Randy Wykoff and Olivia Egen

ETSU student and Environmental Health Sciences laboratory worker, Rebecca Day. Photo by Jim Sledge.

Appalachia is a diverse region of incredible natural beauty and a deep, rich cultural heritage. It is, however, a region that lags behind most of the nation when it comes to the health status of its citizens. According to the Appalachian Regional Commission in 2010 the number of deaths per 100,000 residents in Appalachia was over 1,000 while, nationally, the rate was barely over 800.[1] This means that the number of deaths in Appalachia is approximately 25% higher than it is nationally.

The question is often, and appropriately asked: What should be done to improve the health of the people of the region?

As authors, let us make clear from the outset that the opinions expressed in this article are our own, and do not reflect review or endorsement by East Tennessee State University. That said, we believe there are four specific, interrelated steps that must be taken to fundamentally change the health status of the region:

1. Change Health-Related Behaviors

It has been estimated that 40% of early deaths in America are related to our behaviors and/or life-styles.[2] The leading preventable cause of death in the nation continues to be tobacco use, followed by factors related to diet and exercise (which combine to cause obesity, diabetes and related conditions).[2] Nationally, the prevalence of adults who are obese is 26%. However, obesity rates are extremely high in Appalachia, with over 30% of adults falling within this category in 2010. Of increasing concern in Central Appalachia is the rapidly evolving epidemic of opiate addiction, especially as manifest as prescription drug abuse.

Any effort to improve health in Appalachia will have to address these and other behaviors. To this end, there need to be three distinct health promotion/disease prevention programs: a) programs that give school-age children enough information about their bodies and their health to allow them to make intelligent decisions

about health-threatening behaviors; b) programs that identify adults who are already engaged in health-threatening behaviors, and help them to quit; and c) programs targeted to new parents and parents-to-be so that they create environments in which future generations can develop with appropriate role models, food choices, exercise options, and related activities. Additionally, there are opportunities for interventions at the societal level (policy interventions). For example, raising the price of cigarettes has been shown to be an effective mechanism to reduce adolescent tobacco use. Drug courts can provide options for those with substance addictions beyond incarceration. Schools, churches, businesses, and others can create environments and policies that encourage healthier eating and appropriate physical activity.

The "good news," if there is any, about the fact that behaviors account for 40% of our early deaths in America, is that behaviors can change. Ensuring a more robust future for the people of Appalachia will require that these health behaviors change.

2. Impact the Social Conditions that are Associated with Poor Health

People are often surprised to learn that our health often reflects the social conditions in which we live. There is, for example, a strong correlation between income level and health outcomes. It has been reported that an American in the poorest income category is three times more likely to die before the age of sixty-five as an American in the wealthiest income category.[3] The national poverty rate for the period from 2010-2014 was 15.6%, while the rates in Central Appalachia ranged from 17.5% in the Appalachian counties of North Carolina, to 25.4% in the Appalachian counties of Kentucky.[4] Because poverty is much worse in Appalachia than in the rest of the country it is clear that it will be exceptionally difficult to improve the health status of the people of Appalachia unless we can also improve the economic conditions in which they live. This will require a close collaboration with the private sector, economic-development boards, chambers of commerce, and other groups that may not have, historically, worked closely on health issues.

Another social condition that is strongly related to health is educational achievement. It shocks people to learn that, on average, high school dropouts live five to seven years less than college graduates in the United States.[5] This is not, of course, a direct relationship, as both educational achievement and life expectancy are impacted by common aspects of a child's living conditions. However, education has the dual benefit of providing the child with a range of skills necessary for success in life and, also, preparing them for more productive and meaningful employment opportunities. According to the Appalachian Regional Commission in the period from 2008-2012 the percent of the population aged twenty-five and over with a bachelor's degree or higher was 28.5% nationally, while in the Appalachian region the rate was only 21.3%.[1] This means that the share of the population with higher education is 33% higher nationally than in the Appalachian region, reinforcing the message that it will be difficult to improve health in Appalachia without addressing the educational disparities that exist.

It is becoming increasingly clear that early interventions are the key to success in education. Infant and early childhood development, specifically, cognitive and socio-emotional development are vital for school readiness. Children need to enter elementary school with the basic building blocks necessary for such activities as reading and social-interaction. To this end, there need to be programs that focus on new parents and parents-to-be, to assure that they have the skills and understanding necessary to prepare their children for a life-time of success. Something as simple as reading to a child can impact future academic success. "Education" from the lowest levels to the highest are an ideal target for support from the business and philanthropic communities, since the product of those investments (educated citizens) become the backbone of the job market in the future.

3. Assure Access to Affordable Health Care

People sometimes assume that the only way to improve the health of people living in a certain area is to have more health care—more hospitals, more doctors, more nurses, and more clinics. In some cases, especially in rural and isolated areas, this is true. However, it is often the case that it isn't the physical presence of health care that is missing, it is the inability of people to access that health care—due to lack of insurance (or other means to pay for the care), lack of transportation and opportunity to access the care, or cultures and traditions that haven't, historically, included access to health care.

Many of the hospital systems that serve rural areas in the United States have developed a type of "spoke-and-hub" system where smaller, outlying facilities will provide care for appropriate medical conditions, while referring the most complex or challenging conditions to the more centralized locations. While this system can, and has, worked well it is inevitable that in the most rural and isolated parts of Appalachia, there will be people who cannot

easily access the entry points for the "spoke-and-hub" system.

To this end, there are some obvious steps that will help more people access the system—for example effective transportation, "mobile" delivery of health care, tele-health technology, the use of alternative health care professionals, and more wide-spread insurance coverage. Transportation and "mobile" delivery of health care are self-explanatory. Poverty, illness and age often combine to make it difficult for people to physically travel to a health care delivery site. This could be overcome by creating a more efficient transportation system, or, by bringing health care to the home-bound person in terms of mobile clinics or "house calls." The idea behind alternative health care professionals is that health care delivery, not just hospital care, can be provided using a "spoke-and-hub" system. In this way, the health of the region could be supported by people with less formal training than a doctor or a nurse who can conduct outreach to those with chronic medical conditions, the elderly, and other home-bound people. Alternative health care professionals can provide basic care and support to assure that their patients are filling prescriptions appropriately, taking their medications as directed, keeping appointments, and, above all, that they are accessing the range of services that they need to maintain their health and life-style. The issue of "health insurance coverage" has, at the time of this writing, become a major political issue. Setting aside, for the moment "how" such coverage should be achieved, it is clear that there is a broad social benefit to be obtained from people having the ability to access and pay for health care. How the nation ultimately addresses this need is less important than the fact that it is addressed.

4. Disrupt the Intergenerational Cycles of Poor Health in Appalachia

Over the years, it has become increasingly clear that children tend to inherit the health and social status of their parents. For example, males born to fathers living in the bottom fifth of the income scale, have a 42% likelihood of being in the bottom fifth when they become adults—and only has an 8% chance of being in the top fifth.[6] Additionally, parental smoking is a major determining factor of adolescent smoking patterns and longevity. Those adolescents whose parents smoke are at increased odds to be early regular smokers and early experimenters.[7] Parents' educational level has a tremendous predictive impact on the educational level of their children. There is a twelve-fold difference in the chance of a high school sophomore obtaining a college degree in ten years between the student whose parents didn't complete high school and the student whose parents have a professional degree.[5] The Adverse Childhood Experiences study has revealed the relationship between the traumas in one's youth and the toll these take in later life.[8] For a slew of health problems and risk behaviors including smoking and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) there is a dose-response relationship—the more trauma one endured as a child the more likely one is to exhibit risk behaviors and some diseases.[8]

Time and again, we see the impact of inter-generational cycles of poor health. It is growing abundantly clear that if we want to improve the health of people living in Appalachia, we must attack this problem directly. We must all work together to systematically provide children with the best possible start to their lives.

It is clear to us that we must start with programs for new parents and parents-to-be that give them the knowledge, skills, information, and opportunity to "launch" their children onto the healthiest possible life trajectory. The new parent can read to their child; they can assure that no one smokes around their child; they can give the child a truly healthy diet; they can make sure that the child receives routine medical care; they can be sure that the child is appropriately restrained in a car-seat; and the list goes on and on.

John P. Lamb, Jr. Hall, home of the ETSU College of Public Health. Photo by Charlie Warden.

Once the child enters school, the system can support the child by focusing on assuring the attainment of age-appropriate reading, math, and social skills; providing a healthy diet and regular required physical activity programs (beyond just "competitive" sports) and, of equal importance, significantly increase the amount of

health-related knowledge that is imparted to students at every level.

Businesses can contribute significantly by encouraging healthy eating and regular physical activity. Equally, businesses should be strongly encouraged to support the programs mentioned above. It is becoming almost a cliché in Appalachia that businesses are finding it difficult to hire healthy, educated, drug-free workers. Clearly, it is in everyone's best interest to invest in early childhood programs and educational programs from pre-K through professional schools—the graduates we produce are, literally, the future of our region.

There is a role for everyone, in improving health in Appalachia.

Faith communities can use their unique positions to both support health-related programs, but also, to create a final safety-net that identifies people at greatest risk. Parks and recreation programs can reach out to a new generation of participants and recognize that there must be programs that include all children and not just those with "competitive potential." Restaurants can contribute by assuring that there are healthier options on their menus.

Ultimately, of course, the future of health in Appalachia will be defined by the family and the child's home environment. What we eat, how we exercise, our commitment to education, our understanding of health, and many other factors, are driven by the environment we grow up in. This will not, of course, change overnight. However, if we work together to assure that every child in Appalachia has the best possible start in life we will see a dramatic change over the course of that child's life.

The children who grow up in this "new" Appalachia, will not only be healthier, but they will also become the agents of change over the ensuing generations.

If we invest in our children, the future of health in Appalachia will be incredibly bright and rewarding. ❖

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The Future of Appalachian Music

Wayne Winkler

The Stuart Brothers recording for *On Top of Old Smoky: New Old-Time Smoky Mountain Music* at the ETSU recording lab in Johnson City, Tennessee. Image courtesy Great Smoky Mountains Association.

For some, the juxtaposition of the words "future" and "Appalachian music" may seem contradictory. Wikipedia defines Appalachian music as derived "from various European and African influences, including English ballads, Irish and Scottish traditional music (especially fiddle music), hymns, and African-American blues." For many people, Appalachian music is a means of re-interpreting the past. Where does the future figure into this music?

First of all, let's not confuse "Appalachian music" with "Appalachian musicians." This region has spawned dozens of well-known performers whose music is in no way considered "Appalachian." A short list of musicians and performers from Appalachia whose music is not considered "Appalachian music" would include Roberta Flack ("The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face," "Feel Like Making Love") from Black Mountain, North Carolina; operatic tenor Frank Little, born in Greeneville, Tennessee, and an ETSU alumnus; pianist Roy Hall (composer and original performer of "Whole Lotta Shakin'") from Big Stone Gap, Virginia; blues diva Bessie Smith from Chattanooga, Tennessee; rock guitarist Warren Haynes from Asheville, North Carolina; Bobby Byrd (R&B singer and original member of James Brown's Famous Flames) from Toccoa, Georgia; the doom metal band Bloody Hammers from Transylvania County, North Carolina—the list could go on and on.

Without question, musicians from the Appalachian region have always and will continue to be involved in many different types of music. Appalachian music, on the other hand, is a particular form of music associated with the mountainous region of Southern Appalachia. California-born singer and banjo player Debby McClatchey writes, "Today when ethnomusicologists discuss 'Appalachian music' they generally divide the term into two periods: the traditional music—including ballads and dance tunes, mostly brought over with Anglo-Celtic immigrants, and in evidence from the early eighteenth century through 1900—and the 'old-time' music popular from around 1900 through 1930, a blend of that tradition with parlour and vaudeville music, African-American styles, and Minstrel Show tunes."

Appalachian music became commercially popular in the early twentieth century, forming the foundation of what would become known as country music. Ralph Peer's historic Bristol Sessions in 1927 and 1928, and other recording sessions in the region, played a key role in the establishment of the country music industry. But the commercial influence of Appalachian music was short-lived. McClatchey writes, "The Great Depression of the 1930s put an end to the commercial viability of old-time music. The 1930s and '40s brought in an individual star system with people like Hank Williams, and the advent of Brother Groups like the Delmores, Stanleys, and the Louvins, and the introduction of swing, horns, electricity, and bluegrass. The old traditional music of the mountains gave way to the beginnings of modern commercial country-western music.

"But the traditional old-time Appalachian music never really died off; it just reverted back to being a participatory 'folk' music. Fiddlers' conventions, house parties, and back-porch jams kept the music alive. Few old-time musicians can, or want to make a living playing a style now considered archaic by the general public. Many old songs, originally written for commercial reasons, are now considered traditional, their composers gradually forgotten. A visit to the southern Appalachians, particularly Virginia, West Virginia, and North Carolina, will still find singers and musicians holding forth on banjo and fiddle, still playing 'Soldier's Joy' and 'Arkansas Traveler' with love and gusto."

But some scholars argue "Appalachian music" cannot be so easily defined. The *Performing Arts Encyclopedia* of the Library of Congress states, "The term 'Appalachian music' is in truth an artificial category, created and defined by a small group of scholars in the early twentieth century, but bearing only a limited relationship to the actual musical activity of people living in the Appalachian mountains. Since the region is not only geographically, but also ethnically and musically diverse (and has been since the early days of European settlement there), music of the Appalachian mountains is as difficult to define as is American music in general.

"The early assessments of Appalachian music by non-Appalachian writers reflected the values and interests of the writers much more than those of the subjects. For example, Robert Winslow Gordon, founder of the Archive of Folk Song in the Library of Congress in 1928 (now the American Folklife Center), saw Appalachian folk music as defined by its direct relation to British song as the more 'authentic' or 'American' alternative to African-American and Jewish-American popular music: 'Personally, I frankly believe that the whole project of reviving and making known our true American folk stuff is one of the most worthwhile things to be done today. From the point of view of true Americanism [*sic*]. That stuff is the very soul of our past, of pioneers, of the men who made America. It's not modern Hebrew Broadway jazz.'"

"The notion that there is or ever has been a singular, distinctively 'Appalachian' music is fallacious," says Ted Olson, "because Appalachian musicians historically have hailed from a range of ethnic and racial backgrounds and have blended various cultural traditions; in essence, there have long been many 'Appalachian' musics." Olson is a record producer and member of the faculty in East Tennessee State University's Department of Appalachian Studies.

Daniel Boner, the director of Bluegrass, Old Time and Country Music Studies at ETSU, also sees difficulty in precisely defining "Appalachian music." "It is clear that bluegrass and old-time [music] are identified as Appalachian. Whether or not that is entirely accurate is debatable."

"Music across Appalachia has always reflected changing landscapes and has always incorporated new influences," says Olson. "Musicians today who treasure the music traditions of Appalachia continue to revisit older styles and repertoire associated with the region while adding contemporary elements—new songs, ballads, and tunes, new themes, and new stylistic approaches. Hence, while 'Appalachian' musics today remain in flux, they are nonetheless bound to the region through the intentional and affectionate incorporation of verifiable regional cultural traditions."

"'Music across Appalachia has always reflected changing landscapes and has always incorporated new influences.'"

Boner sees the music traditionally associated with Appalachia as a part of the American musical vocabulary, no longer geographically defined, and certainly not static. "This music is being created

today in new ways. JAM [Junior Appalachian Musicians] programs for youngsters, camps, festivals, etc. We associate these with Appalachia, although there may be as much, or more, music-making that takes place far away from Appalachia and by people with no connection to Appalachia. I'm talking about non-commercial, community music."

With music of any style and genre available to all of us at the touch of a keyboard, can any type of music be identified geographically? "We are in a global society now, right?" says Boner. "Certain types of music may have been 'exclusively' regional in the past, but now it is very easy for music to be experienced via the web. I suspect there are some who still consider Appalachia to hold authentic regional music. The same connection could be drawn to Delta blues. There are more non-Mississippians performing Delta blues in 2016 than there ever were in Mississippi in 1936. Does it sound the same? Maybe, maybe not."

The *Performing Arts Encyclopedia* states, "In truth, the more Appalachians are able to represent themselves, the harder it becomes to define 'Appalachian' music or culture in any meaningful way. Stephen William Foster has stated, 'One might argue that the notion of Appalachia as a distinctive and creditable variant of American culture remains a minority opinion.' It has more or less disappeared as a scholarly topic, not because the music is unimportant, but because the term has become less and less meaningful. In fact, music of the Appalachian region has never been one thing, but rather another multifaceted force in the creation of twentieth-century music."

Ted Olson believes that "Appalachian music" is still being made, although the musicians making it may have little or no connection to the region. "'Appalachian' music or musics can be heard today across Appalachia and also outside the region wherever and whenever musicians are moved by the sounds and values associated with the region."

When asked who the cutting-edge performers reflecting the musical styles associated with Appalachia are, Dan Boner cites "Darrell Scott of Kentucky and Shawn Camp from Arkansas may be cutting-edge songwriters and performers. Our own Amythyst Kiah is a cutting-edge singer who is still finding her way musically. 'Cutting-edge' is hard to define when talking about the region, because people are either writing in a traditional-regional style or they are influenced by other commercial artists. A band like Folk Soul Revival may be considered a cutting-edge regional group, though their music is more heavily influenced by pop and acoustic rock than bluegrass or old-time."

Ted Olson says, "There are so many to mention. As a place to start, I'll mention some names drawn from the list of musicians included on a 2016 anthology celebrating contemporary Appalachian music I produced for Great Smoky Mountains Association, *On Top of Old Smoky: New Old-Time Smoky Mountain Music*: Sheila Kay Adams, Roy Andrade, Norman and Nancy Blake, Dom Flemons, Alice Gerrard, Bruce Greene, Corbin Hayslett, David Holt, Dale Jett, Carol Elizabeth Jones, Amythyst Kiah, John Lilly, Dolly Parton, Martin Simpson, Ed Snodderly, Jody Stecher and Kate Brislin, Travis Stuart, Bryan Sutton, Tony Trischka, Stephen Wade, Eugene Wolf, and Kalia Yeagle."

"Appalachian music" may be even harder to define in the future than it has been in the past. But the musicians of this region continue to celebrate the musical values and influences of Appalachia, even as they incorporate sounds and styles from other regions—just as they always have.❖

Wayne Winkler is the director of ETSU's public radio station, WETS-FM/HD. He is also the author of *Walking Toward the Sunset: The Melungeons of Appalachia*, and is past-president of the Melungeon Heritage Association.

Music Reviews

Wayne Winkler

Chatham County Line
Autumn
Yep Roc Records

Don't expect anything innovative or unfamiliar from Chatham County Line on this, their seventh studio album. Guitarist, songwriter, and lead singer Dave Wilson says, "We create a product that you're familiar with and you'll enjoy going back to because you know what to expect." Since the late 1990's, the Raleigh, North Carolina-based quartet of Wilson, John Teer (mandolin and fiddle), Chandler Holt (banjo and vocals), and Greg Readling (bass, pedal steel guitar, keyboards, and vocals) has featured a traditional string band lineup wearing suits and ties, working around a single microphone during live performances. The band continues to do what it does best: solid songwriting, tasteful acoustic arrangements, and classic three- and four-part harmonies.

Nothing sounds forced or rushed. The album was recorded, as the title suggests, in the autumn of 2014, and the autumn of 2015—not the schedule of a band trying to meet a deadline. In fact, Wilson days it was the time between sessions allowed the songs to take shape. "It's like leaving your desk and taking a walk. You have your best ideas when you're not working on what you're supposed to be working on."

Wilson has a songwriter's ear for picking up snippets of conversation and turning them into compelling songs. For example, the song "Rock in the River" came from overhearing a stranger lament about a lost girlfriend, a woman he thought was *the one*, but he overheard her mother telling her, "Don't worry. He's just another rock in the river." The band creates watery melodies that allow the story in the song to flow effortlessly.

Even more poignant is "Jackie Boy," described by Wilson as a "tribute to my old college friends and their dogs that have passed." The idea for the song had been in Wilson's head for a long time before he finally worked up a guitar part, pared the song down to its essentials, and came up with a track guaranteed to bring a tear to the eye of anyone who has ever lost a four-legged friend. "Show Me the Door" had a similarly long gestation, existing as a vague piano part in Greg Readling's head for more than a decade before emerging as a jam during the first studio session for the album. Wilson came up with lyrics during that initial run-through and the song wound up as the album's finale.

Chatham County Line is in its second decade of making music on its own terms. As Chandler Holt says, "Music today has almost become about everything else besides the music, but for the four of us, it's very much the opposite of that. We get to do what we want to do. What else is there?"

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The Coal Men
Pushed to the Side
Vaskaleedez Records

"It's not a concept record," says Dave Coleman, guitarist, vocalist, songwriter, and founder of The Coal Men, "but the narratives of being pushed to the side, of being on the fringe or alienated; they're part of the story of the record."

The fifth album from this Nashville-based trio (Dave Ray on drums and vocals, Paul Slivka on bass) sounds like it was made by a different band than the one that released *Escalator* in 2013. The big, full made-for-rock-radio sound has been replaced by a stripped-down, minimalist approach that

not only works well with this collection of songs, but seems more natural for the band.

The set opens with "Depreciate," a song ostensibly about the band's aging touring van, but serving as a metaphor for anyone who has left youth behind: *"I'm nearly ready for the junkyard, counting down the miles / I can't remember all my travels, but boy I rode 'em out in style."* A trio of songs co-written with Jeff Wickland tells the stories of people whose problems run deeper that the natural progression of age. "Willy Jett" is a lonely coal miner who finds solace with alcohol and Lily, a working girl. But the solace is fleeting: *"The voice he heard was the sweetest sound / But it was only for that night / It was lonely*

he found still hanging around / Come the morning light." "Lily Hurst" picks up the story of Willy's companion and turns into a traditional murder ballad: *"Which man she was with, I guess I never did hear / He drew a line left Lily bleeding ear to ear."* "Travis" tells the story of a young man in a small town: *"Travis lived 'cross town by the railroad track, just his dad and four walls of a dying shotgun shack / His mind was restless, it ached and it groaned / He walked this town, head hung down, most days he stayed stoned."* Needless to say, a happy ending to this tale would be completely out of place on this album. Likewise, the title cut, co-written with Taylor Bates, is populated with lonely people and sad stories: *"Ooh, it's the lonely, lonely broken ones that break your little heart."*

It's not all gloomy, though. Driving fast to make it to a gig is the theme of "Speeding Like a Demon," The rockabilly-flavored "Fast Driver" continues the automotive metaphors. The country-punk opening of the closing song, "The Singer (In Louisville)" doesn't quite match sonically with the rest of the album, but its theme of an aging country singer who never quite made it—based on a short story by Tommy Womack—fits well thematically: *"I know he's hurting, in fact in pain / Now that they're asking for 'Fire And Rain.'"*

Dave Coleman's guitar work has been compared favorably with Kenny Vaughan and Buddy Miller, and the swampy "Stones River" demonstrates that Tony Joe White has been an important influence. The Coal Men have been described as "Nashville's best-kept secret," and songs this honest and well-crafted are unlikely to break through to commercial country radio. But, as Coleman sings in "The Payoff," making music for the right reasons is more rewarding in the long run: *"No matter what you do / it may not pay off for you / if the payoff is all you're really in it for."*

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The Earls of Leicester
Rattle and Roar
Rounder Records

"On the first record, we were trying to sound exactly like Flatt and Scruggs," says Jerry Douglas, founder of the Earls of Leicester. "This record is what Flatt and Scruggs would have done if they had had time to listen to it the next day."

Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs, along with their band The Foggy Mountain Boys, were the premier bluegrass band in America for two decades. Formed in 1948 after guitarist/vocalist Flatt and banjo virtuoso Scruggs left Bill Monroe's Bluegrass Boys, the band featured an excellent lineup, including Paul Warren on

fiddle, Uncle Josh Graves on Dobro, and mandolinist Curly Seckler. In the 1960s, they became well-known to mainstream America, providing the theme song to television's *The Beverly Hillbillies* and the rollicking "Foggy Mountain Breakdown" to the film *Bonnie and Clyde*. They set a standard that bluegrass bands have strived to meet ever since.

Indeed, the first album from the all-star tribute group The

Earls of Leicester (featuring Douglas on Dobro, Tim O'Brien on mandolin, Johnny Warren on fiddle, Charlie Cushman on banjo, Shawn Camp on guitar and lead vocals, and Barry Bales on upright bass) faithfully recreated the sound of Flatt and Earl from the period of 1960 to the breakup of the band in 1969. The trouble was, their re-creation didn't really add anything to the original material. On this second effort (with Jeff White replacing O'Brien on mandolin), the Earls of Leicester add a little something to the originals. For one thing, Jerry Douglas, while paying tribute to Josh Graves' of the Foggy Mountain Boys, sounds more like himself than he did on the Earls' initial outing. Likewise, Shawn Camp sounds more confident in taking on the deceptively relaxed vocals of Lester Flatt.

What the band has done is to deconstruct the songs and rebuild them with a modern approach. To do that and still do justice to the originals is tricky, but these fine musicians do that superbly. Fiddler Johnny Warren sounds a lot like his dad on "Buck Creek Gal," the original of which featured Johnny's dad Paul, one of the Foggy Mountain Boys. Charlie Cushman faced a serious challenge in re-creating the unique Scruggs sound, but he does so quite well, especially on songs like "Flint Hill Special," which featured Scruggs de-tuning and re-tuning a banjo string in the course of the song.

The Earls of Leicester are more than just a tribute band. Merely copying Flatt and Scruggs songs note-for-note would be a poor tribute to such an innovative band. Instead, the Earls do some innovating of their own, incorporating some of their own sound while retaining the spirit and soul of the original songs. Lester and Earl would be proud of these boys.

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Southern Culture on the Skids
The Electric Pinecones
Kudzu Records

The trio of guitarist and vocalist Rick Miller, bassist and vocalist Mary Huff, and drummer Dave Hartman, came out of Chapel Hill, North Carolina,

in the early 1980s with a sound Miller calls "Americana from the wrong side of the tracks." Their garage-band mix of rockabilly, surf, R&B, and a dash of psychedelic earned SCOTS legions of fans. In 2014 the band was honored with an exhibition at the Southern Folklife Collection at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, featuring their music and cultural contributions, including the Naugahyde recliner from the cover of *Plastic Seat Sweat*.

For their fifth album on their own Kudzu label, Southern Culture on the Skids has adopted a new/old persona: The Electric Pinecones. "The Pinecones was a folk-a-hill-a-billy garage bend we used to put together just for kicks," says Miller. "We loved the sound of the 60's West Coast folk rock and psych bands. The Pinecones was our outlet for material that was not in the SCOTS vein. We even opened for ourselves occasionally."

The Pinecones set was, as Miller puts it, "ground zero" for this new CD. The sound harkens back to mid-60s Los Angeles bands like The Byrds and The Seeds, with maybe a dash of early Rolling Stones. From the opening cut "Freak Flag"—about being different and respecting yourself—tremolo-laden guitar and pounding drums propel *The Electric Pinecones* through eleven new songs and a remake of the SCOTS tune "Swamp Fox—The Original." The single from the disc, "Dirt Road," features Mary Huff singing a gothic ode to séances, thunderstorms, and lost love.

To quote a 2014 article from the *Charleston City Paper*, "The only way Southern Culture on the Skids is ever getting into the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame is if they buy tickets." But their latest release is a tribute to an often-overlooked rock and roll sound, and is their most diverse album yet.

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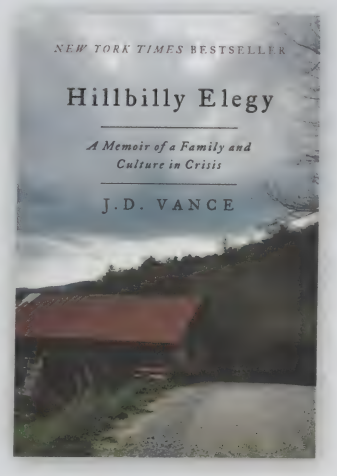
Book Reviews

Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis
J.D. Vance
HarperCollins, 2016

In 1963, a lawyer, Harry M. Caudill, wrote *Night Comes to the Cumberlands: A Biography of a Depressed Area.* It attempted to ascertain why Appalachia, especially eastern Kentucky, is beset with poverty. Although some academic books, notably Cynthia M. Duncan's *Worlds Apart: Poverty and Politics in Rural America* and *The Road to Poverty: The Making of Wealth and Hardship in Appalachia* by Dwight B. Billings, have addressed the same question, it wasn't until 2016 that another general interest book has taken on this quandary. Again the author is a lawyer. Unlike Caudill, who grew up in eastern Kentucky and practiced law there until his death, J. D. Vance's connection is through his grandparents who grew up in Breathitt County, Kentucky, but moved away to Middletown, Ohio, where J.D. Vance, who now works for an investment firm in San Francisco, grew up. Caudill served in the military and lived the rest of his life with shrapnel in his back from fascist fire incurred while liberating Italy. J. D. Vance served the Marines during the Iraq war as a publicist. Vance's flare for public relations is evident in his national best-seller, entitled *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis.*

Without the title and subtitle, this book would stand as an interesting memoir that is disconcerting primarily because it exaggerates the subject's singularity. To describe his life at Yale Law School, he states "my experiences were unique" because "I went to a mediocre public high school, my parents didn't go to college, and I grew up in Ohio." He goes on to say. "At Yale, these things were true of no one" (p. 202). This is patently false. My daughter Sky went to Yale after graduating from Berea [Kentucky] Community School, which had only one Advanced Placement class. My daughter Sunshine was the advisor at Frostburg State of a current Yale graduate student who was the first of her family to go to college and attended a community college first and then a regional university, not a flagship like Vance's Ohio State. A classmate of my son, Berry, when he was in graduate school at Yale, was from North Dakota.



No wonder Vance gets in trouble generalizing from his autobiography to conclusions about Appalachian culture. At the end of the book are twenty-one "Notes," fifteen different sources comprising nine websites, one movie, one newspaper article, one journal, and three books. His lack of investigative curiosity is confirmed by his statement that Breathitt County, Kentucky, is called "Bloody Breathitt" (p. 189) because it was the only American county that reached its enlistment quotas for World War I through volunteers. It doesn't take much checking to discover that Breathitt got its unfortunate moniker as a result of family feuds and that other American counties attained enlistment quotas from volunteers.

Vance admits that he is what he calls a "modern conservative." (p. 194) The only specific policy question Vance confronts is his argument (p. 185) against attempts to curb the malpractices of payday lenders. He shows that sometimes payday loans can be helpful to poor people, but fails to examine his assumption that any regulation would totally

eliminate short-term loans. Vance sums up his blindness to the institutional and political dimensions of poverty with this question: "How much of our lives, good and bad, should we credit to our personal decisions and how much is just the inheritance of our culture, our families, and our parents who have failed their children?" (231).

When Harry Caudill wrote *Night Comes to the Cumberlands* in 1963, the dominant paradigm in explaining poverty was the notion of a "culture of poverty." Caudill gainsaid this concept by demonstrating the role of government policy, contrasting eastern Kentucky with East Tennessee, an area that benefitted enormously from the Tennessee Valley Authority. Further scholarship resulted first in the model of Appalachia as an internal colony and then, with Rodger Cunningham's *Apples on the Flood: Minority Discourse and Appalachia*, a peripheral region. J. D. Vance would set us back more than fifty years to another era of victim blaming and political inaction based on the outdated "culture of poverty" thesis.

Perhaps it is not Vance's fault that *The New York Times* and other media outlets have jumped on his book as an explanation for why "hillbillies" support Donald Trump's Presidential bid. But he does bear responsibility for promulgating the views that folks with Appalachian roots comprise a monolithic culture, that the problems of the poor are their own fault, and that policy discussions are thus moot.

-George Brosi

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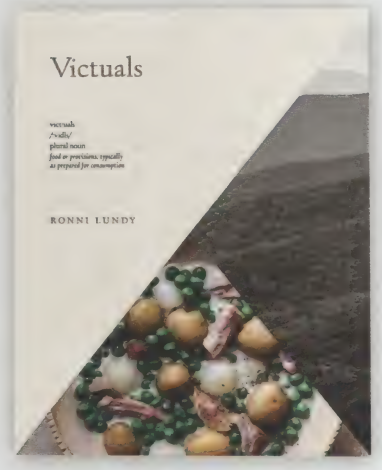
Victuals: An Appalachian Journey with Recipes
Ronni Lundy
Clarkson Potter, 2016

Victuals is Ronni Lundy's third Appalachian cookbook, published over a twenty-six year span. Clearly she is not just riding the crest of the current wave of interest in regional foodways. Rather, she is one of the pioneers in this field along with the late John Egerton, to whom she dedicates this book.

What she provides here is a fascinating romp around our region lighting down in the laps of many of the premier practitioners of the art and craft of regional cooking. Her passages are infused with sensitivity to the contributions of African-Americans and Cherokees and a keen sense of regional history. Iconic individuals and institutions abound, including those with little connection to foodways. Scholars like Wilma Dunaway, writers like Gurney Norman, and activists like Don West and Helen Lewis emerge as Ronni Lundy provides context for her more particular considerations.

The book is divided into seven pertinent sections. Her first section, "Roots and Seeds," starts by zooming into the Staunton, Virginia, area, the location of the Museum of Frontier History, providing a wonderful opportunity to explore our historical context. Ronni Lundy suppresses any urge for righteous indignation about the museum's clearly tardy recognition of Appalachia's non-European heritage, and proceeds to inform her readers about local folks who are deeply involved in food cultivation, preparation, and sharing.



Like the rest of the sections, it is well-illustrated with color photographs, includes several appropriate recipes and a profile of one individual involved in regional foodways.

Next comes "Salt" which brings her to Saltville, Virginia, and Charleston, West Virginia, both homes not only of historical salt production, but contemporary individuals who grow and serve regional foods.

The "Corn" section takes the reader to the remote

Snowbird Community in Graham County, North Carolina, home of many of the most traditional Cherokee people. This is particularly appropriate because of the central place corn has had in Cherokee life for as long as anyone knows.

The "Bean" section starts in Corbin where the author was born and then moves to a more meaningful focus on heirloom seed entrepreneur Billy Best, a native of Haywood County, North Carolina, who has lived most of his adult life near Berea, Kentucky. I've known Billy for more than fifty years, but Ronni Lundy's treatment of his work gave me new insights. It was also exemplary in that it includes not just Billy, but his wife Irmgard as well.

The "Apple" section brings the reader to Henderson County, North Carolina, formerly a major apple-producing area. The area around Winchester, Virginia, another leading location of apple orchards in previous generations, is not visited.

The section on "Preserving" travels to the shadow of Mt. Pisgah near Asheville, the current home of a plethora of small independent restaurants serving the growing "alternative" community there. Although only two paragraphs are devoted to community canning kitchens, Ronni Lundy takes that topic up in greater depth in her concluding chapter, entitled "Appalachian Spring."

Clearly Ronni Lundy needed to focus on communities where she could find people currently deeply involved in regional foodways, so places like Newport, Tennessee, the historical home of the Stokely Canning Company, at one time one of America's largest canning companies, is not mentioned, nor is the current exhibit at the Blue Ridge Institute & Museum of Ferrum College which has recently featured an impressive display highlighting many nearby historical canneries.

The "Husbandry" section remains in the Asheville area and considers the historical drives of animals through the mountains to markets. For this and other chapters, I would have enjoyed a bibliography, perhaps of books mentioned, plus additional books by individuals introduced in this book, and possibly others as well, such as John Ehle's *The Journey of August King*, which presents a multi-cultural story in the context of the historical animal drives north from Asheville that Ronni Lundy illuminates. Also I would have liked picture captions so I could identify the people and places illustrated.

Overall, *Victuals* is much more than a fountain of pertinent information on regional foodways, with an emphasis on these seven foundational foods. The book delights the reader with an engaging journey that tells compelling stories of fascinating people; presents a cornucopia of great recipes so delightfully regional that most sweeten with sorghum; and offers a visual celebration richly illustrated with gorgeous and evocative full-color photographs. However, the result is not only a beautiful coffee-table book. Lundy's treatment of this important dimension of regional life, now receiving well-deserved attention, is both delightful and definitive.

-George Brosi

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This Shaky Earth
Linda Parsons Marion
Texas Review Press, 2016

The title poem of Linda Parsons Marion's latest collection, *This Shaky Earth,* conflates notions of vulnerability; standing roadside on a busy interstate, a flat tire on her ironically branded Outback, the speaker contrasts her immediate discomfort and inconvenience with the long-term endurance of her widowed aunt who after years of tending to an ailing husband now suffers her own debilitating illness. The speaker considers how a semi driver's briefest distraction would lead not only to her losing knowledge of a comforting world but also of the world's losing recognition of her, *"the earth / barely shaken"* (17-18). Coming to terms with one's place in the world provides this volume's overarching theme and makes

its transitional joy sweeter.

And this volume contains a great deal of joy, although its nature changes as the aggregate narrative voice weighs a lifetime of experience. The opening poems celebrate abundance, sometimes in nostalgic images of comfort but just as often in the expected renewal of spring planting and protracted harvests of summer and fall. The volume's opening sections often rely on the images of cultivating, tending, harvesting, and cooking as symbols of emotional attachment, cherished skills learned and taught in turn. In "An Embarrassment of Chard," profligate nature far exceeds the persona's needs. "*I can't keep up,*" she complains, "*can't make enough soup, / an embarrassment of chard brushed / by the bare legs of girls, profuse as clover*" (27-29). Resigning herself to the idea that her garden offers so much that she might as well invite granddaughters to "*tear squash buds for tea, clink / birchbark cups, sip ahhhh. Your ground / sprawls nigh and yonder*" (34-36), the persona associates the earth's boundless capacity for renewal with the girls' immediate and personal potential.

Nevertheless, this volume finds poignancy in the immediate joy of acknowledging such potential. In "Signature," the persona cannot help but lament that a granddaughter has taken crayons to a newly acquired inscribed volume of poetry from a friend, but she knows that the young girl's hands "*won't stay dimpled, unlettered, schooled / to the margins, the ruler, the rule*" (18-20), wary of how the girl, like she, will learn to balance creativity with discipline. Even the love of reading cherished books to children underscores lessons hard won; in "Where the Wild Dreams Are," the grandmother, sharing Sendak, realizes that "*the wildest thing of all is loneliness*" (6). "*I save what I can,*" we read in the poem, "Change of Season," "*unfurl / beach towels, sheets*

holding my daughter's scent" (5-6), as we find yet another insistence in this poem that every trace of an absent loved one affirms strong bonds.

Such memories acknowledge loss, of course; in "Sated," an elderly woman "*puzzles / why she's still above the contrary ground she hoed / tugged, swept clean*" (12-14), and in "The Great Lie," the speaker cannot brake the course of disturbing associations, "*my father footloose at sorority parties, / my mother's miscarriage between husbands*" (17-18). As a result, the speaker turns instead to what values she hopes to preserve, celebrating the creativity nurtured in her family ("*let fingers wing apple to cocoon, / x-ray to zebra*" ["Signature" 21-22]) and her own resolve to continue to create ("*I let it flow—tiny refusals*" ["Blood Soup" 7]). And, while poems such as "Old" and "Knitbone" overtly focus on healing from physical injury, the poems invite our understanding subtle allusions to emotional healing as well; the "*bruises, once sore and glaring, seep into forgetfulness*" ("Late Ripening"10), she writes, and in "The Gathering Bowl," we find yet another assertion of how even these hard experiences lead our speaker to further creativity and understanding: "*Patience becomes / time burying heaven in earth, becomes / hours I've stooped for the sweetest / notion*" (25-28). In *This Shaky Earth*, Linda Parsons Marion insists that finding delight and helping others discover it provide much needed resilience to sustain us in our changing world.

-Thomas Alan Holmes

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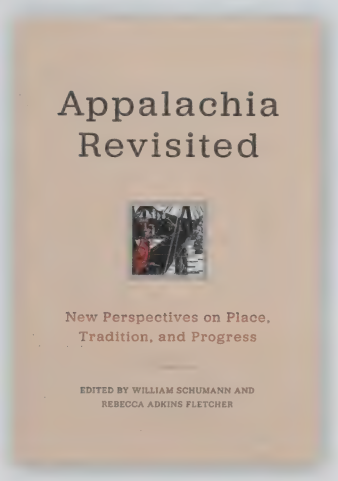
Books in Brief

Appalachia Revisited: New Perspectives on Place, Tradition, and Progress

William Schumann and Rebecca Adkins Fletcher, editors

University Press of Kentucky, 2016

This book amply demonstrates what good choices Appalachian State made in selecting Billy Schumann to direct their Appalachian


Appalachia Revisited
New Perspectives on Place, Tradition, and Progress
EDITED BY WILLIAM SCHUMANN AND REBECCA ADKINS FLETCHER

programs, and East Tennessee State made in hiring Becky Adkins Fletcher in their Department of Appalachian Studies. They have energized a new generation of Appalachian scholars as demonstrated by the fact that of the twenty-four contributors to this collection of essays, I only know Billy and Anita Puckett. This is not the old guard in the field who I have been working with since the 1960s. What is even more impressive is that Billy and Becky have exemplified, in this volume, the values that both veterans and newcomers have hoped would infuse the next generation. The book has four parts. It starts with an acknowledgement of "Race, Ethnicity, and Gender"; goes through "Language, Rhetoric, and Literacy"; right into "Economy and Environment"; and concludes with "Engagement." This is exactly what is needed: recognition of the importance of dealing with these issues and a desire for our academic work to facilitate active engagement. The authors of the selections here represent not only professors, but also doctoral and undergraduate students and people in both the non-profit and business sectors of the economy. Their topics include fracking, The Carolina Chocolate Drops, and prison. This book is important not just for its content, but also for the example it sets for future place-based and interdisciplinary academic enterprise conducted from a global perspective.

-George Brosi

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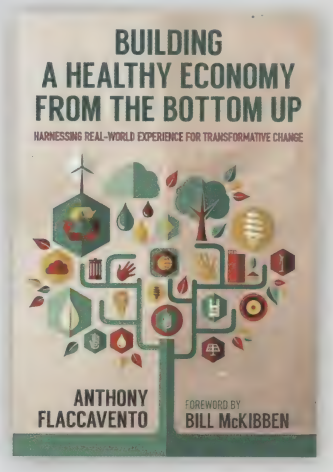
Building a Healthy Economy from the Bottom Up: Harnessing Real-World Experience for Transformative Change

Anthony Flaccavento

University Press of Kentucky, 2016

Anthony Flaccavento is an organic farmer who lives near Abingdon, Virginia. In 2012, he ran for the U.S. Congress to represent the southwestern most district in the state. He garnered over 38% of the vote against the victorious Republican incumbent. He is the founder of Appalachian Sustainable Development and is the President of a non-profit called SCALE, which stands for Sequestering Carbon, Accelerating Local Economies. The author of over 100 articles in publications as varied as the *Washington Post* and the *Huffington Post*, he has published one previous book, *Healthy Food Systems: A Toolkit for Building Value*



Chains. His new book examines five transitions that the author believes can revitalize American society. They start and end with a new consumer consciousness dedicated to small-scale, sustainable alternatives to dependence upon the current top-down economy and society that fosters extreme income gaps and unsustainable environmental practices. His other chapters illustrate small, local alternative producers of food, energy, and other vital goods and services; alternative

financial and investment institutions; regional and national networks that strengthen these initiatives, and media, art, and civic alternatives. Each of these transitions is the focus of a chapter with an emphasis on concrete examples of successful alternative institutions. This book thus comprises an exciting recounting not only of how individuals can make a difference, but also real reasons to be optimistic despite discouraging day-to-day news.

-George Brosi

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Blue Winged Olive
Don Johnson
Spring Knoll Press, 2016

Blue Winged Olive marks an impressive fictional debut by established Tennessee poet Don Johnson. Set in a familiar East Tennessee landscape, this hard-boiled novel traces the fortunes of Tucker Chenoweth, a violent and capable protagonist who contends with assault, murder, and small-town corruption.

Chenoweth is drawn into the action of the novel when he is assaulted on his own property. However, due to combat experience during the Vietnam War, Chenoweth is no easy target. Through stealth and guile, he proves his mettle and resolve.

Johnson depicts a man of action amidst a world on the cusp of anarchy. In this regard, the novel is reminiscent of recent neo-noir novels, like Frank Bill's *Donnybrook* and Todd Robinson's *The Hard Bounce*. However, there is a distinct attention to place in Johnson's novel, a sense of the mountains and river in his work, that demonstrate his affinity for writing about the natural world.

Some readers may be well-advised that the violent imagery can be quite intense, as in the opening scene, but these hard edges are consistent with the overall design of the narrative.

Johnson is himself an accomplished flyfisherman, and the fishing scenes clearly reflect this intimate touch for the sophistication of that passion. This air of authenticity pervades the entirety of the novel. This is very much a book that has come from a place of passion.

The novel bears the subtitle "A Tucker Chenoweth Novel," which seems to imply a continuation of the main character's adventures in subsequent volumes. For those drawn to the steely and tough world that Johnson creates, it appears there will be ample supply of conflicts to tackle in the near future.

-Charles Dodd White

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George Brosi is a bookseller, editor, and professor. Since 1985 he has regularly written up new Appalachian books. They now appear on the website of his book business, Appalachian Mountain Books: ApMtBooks.com.

Thomas Alan Holmes, a professor of English at East Tennessee State University, lives in Johnson City. He has placed work in *Appalachian Heritage*, *The North American Review*, and *Valparaiso Poetry Review*, among other publications.

Charles Dodd White is the author of *A Shelter of Others*, *Lambs of Men*, and *Sinners of Sanction County*. He currently teaches at Pellissippi State Community College in Knoxville.

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Where I've Always Been

Robert S. King

The hills hold me. All these years you could have
felt my spirit gliding here in these mountains
where the body has finally come to join it.
At last I disobeyed red lights and embraced
the daydreams. Flat sidewalks and asphalt hid
the ancient trails that should have led here long ago.

The hills move me. I am born of waterfall,
risen of cloud kissing mountaintop, poured like trails
on peaks and valleys where I am eye to eye
with the peace of the land.

The hills age me, but do not call me old.
I am ancient oak; my roots climb the mountain.
I am the raindrop that ended thirst, the campfire
that pushed back the night and the cold.

The hills join me. Strings of starlight
root down into rivers, stitching earth to heaven
along the long way home.

Published in *One Man's Profit* (Sweatshoppe Publications, 2014)

Georgia-born Robert S. King lives in Lexington, Kentucky, edits *Kentucky Review*, and publishes poems in magazines, including *Atlanta Review*, *Chariton Review*, *Kenyon Review*, and *Southern Poetry Review*. His latest book is *Developing a Photograph of God* (Glass Lyre Press, 2014).

Some of the graduate students in the Department of Appalachian Studies at East Tennessee State University (and possible future contributors to the digital version of *Now & Then*). *From Left to Right: (Back Row)* Austin Gregory, Clinton Ross, James Edgar, Michael Luchtan, Corbin Hayslett; *(Middle Row)* Ashley Smith, Colleen Trenwith, Rachel Reichert, Ariel Hundley; *(Front Row)* Saro Lynch-Thomason, Courtney Rhoades, Rebecca Proffitt. Photo by Ron Campbell, ETSU Photo Lab.

As we look to the future of a student-driven, all-digital *Now & Then*, we are reminded of quotes from two past presidents. Abraham Lincoln is quoted as saying, "The best way to predict your future is to create it." Franklin D. Roosevelt said, "We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future." ❖

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In many parts of Appalachia, big box stores have replaced family-owned businesses. In this photograph, entitled *Johnson City, TN*, Matthew J. Brown wryly documents the changing face of the region. Photo courtesy the photographer.